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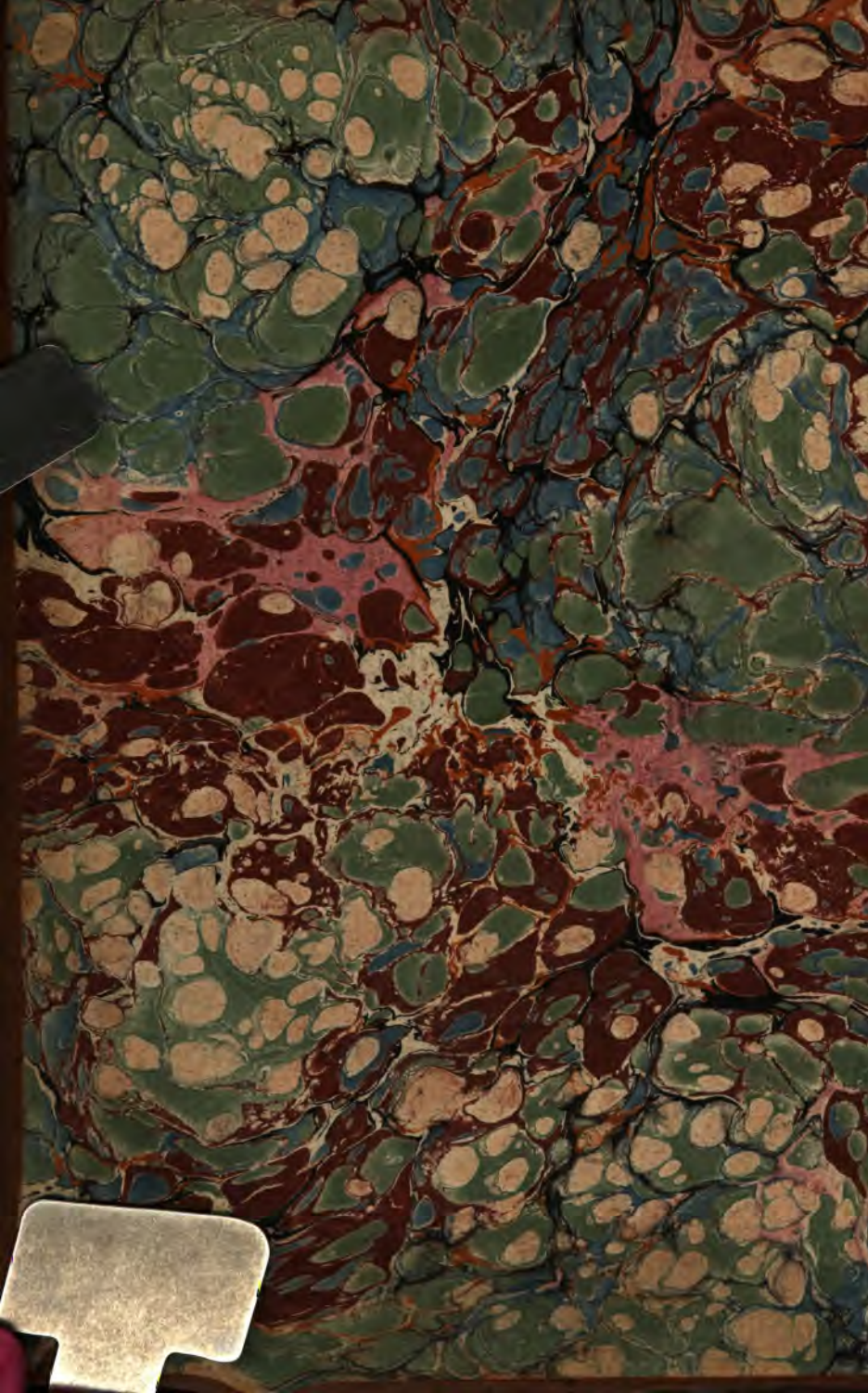
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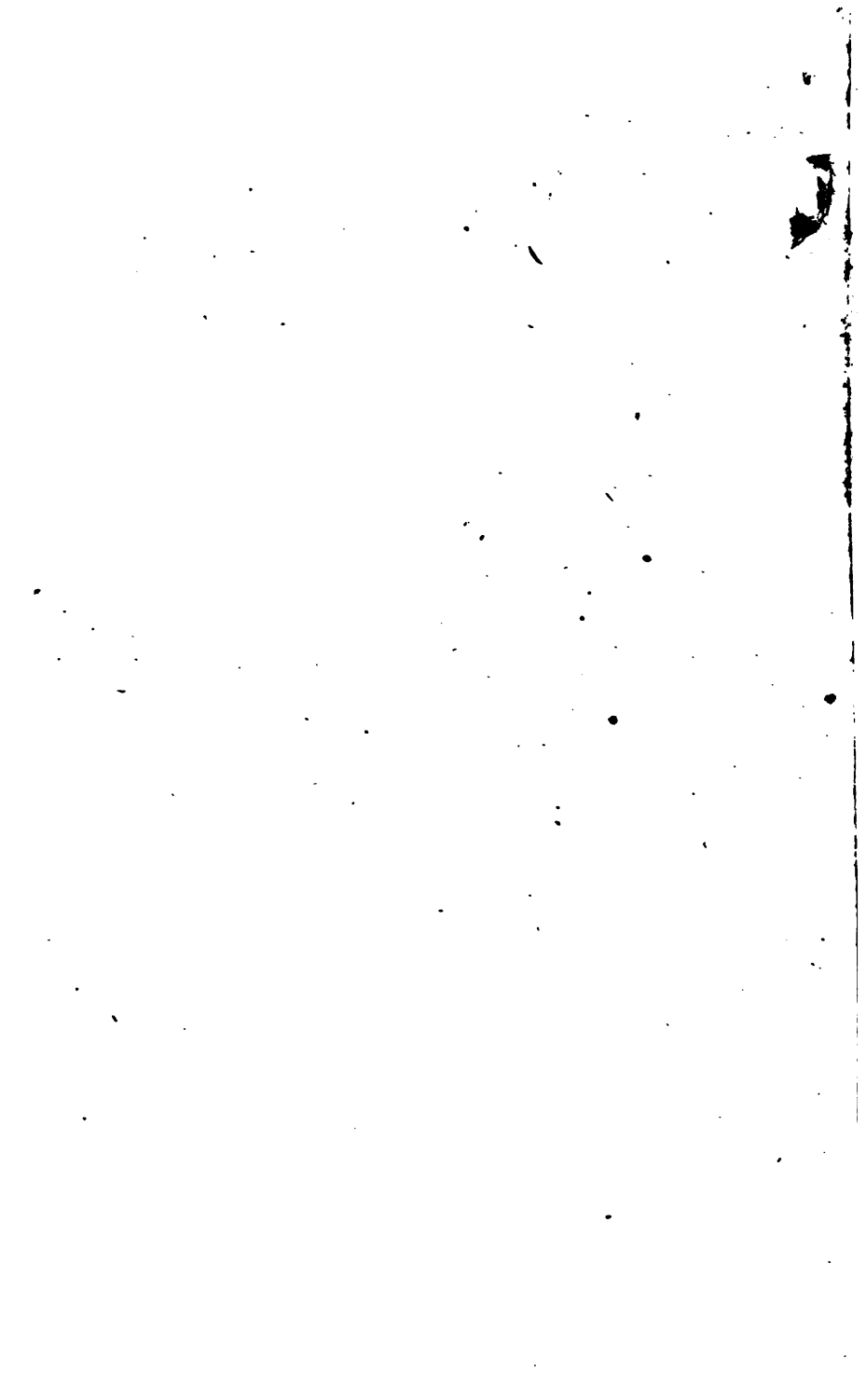
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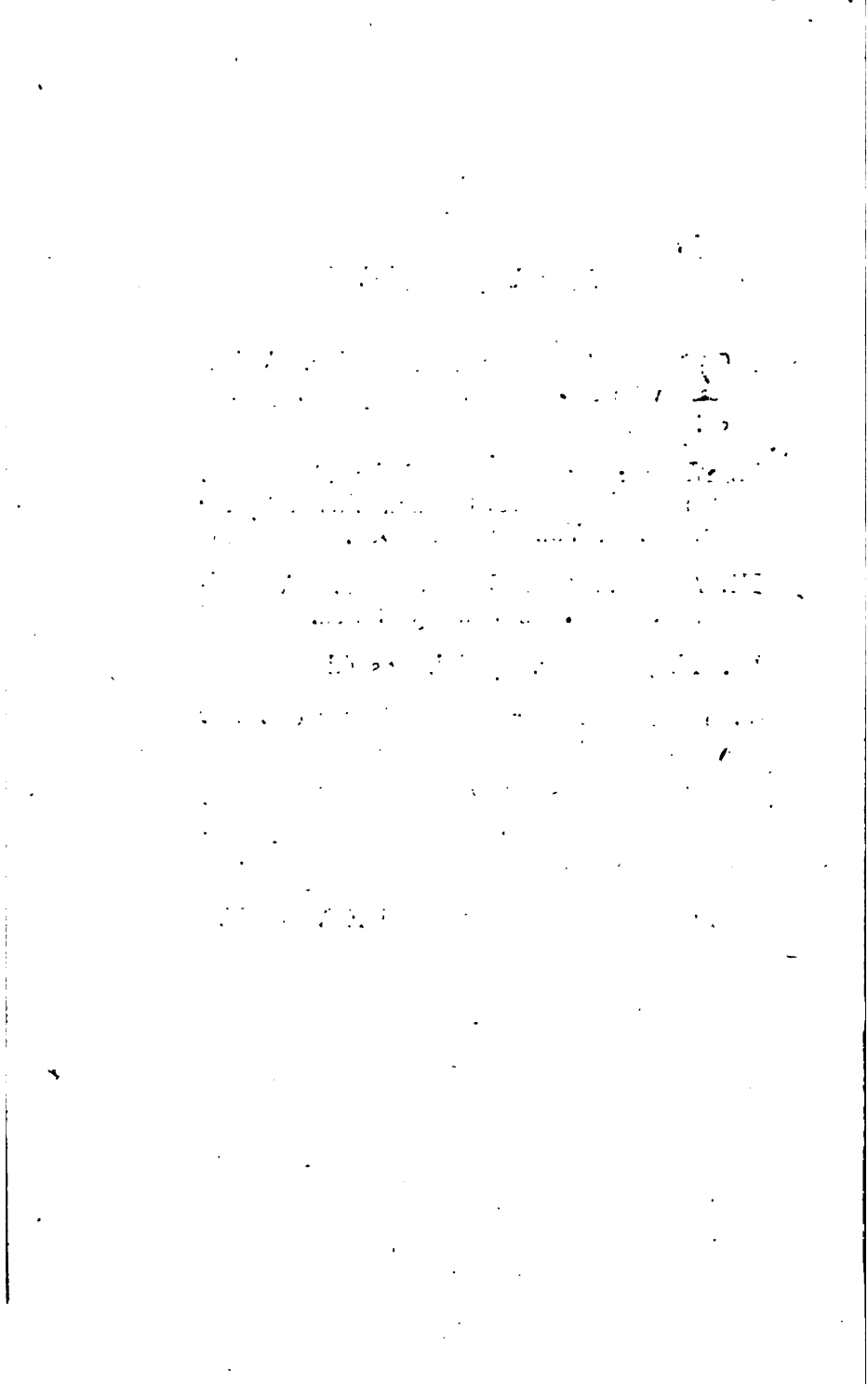
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T H E

L O V E R S.

5
01



THE
LOVERS:

OR, THE
MEMOIRS

OF

Lady MARY SC———,
AND THE
Hon. Miss AMELIA B———.

What! at these years to venture on the Fair?

POPE.

V O L. II.

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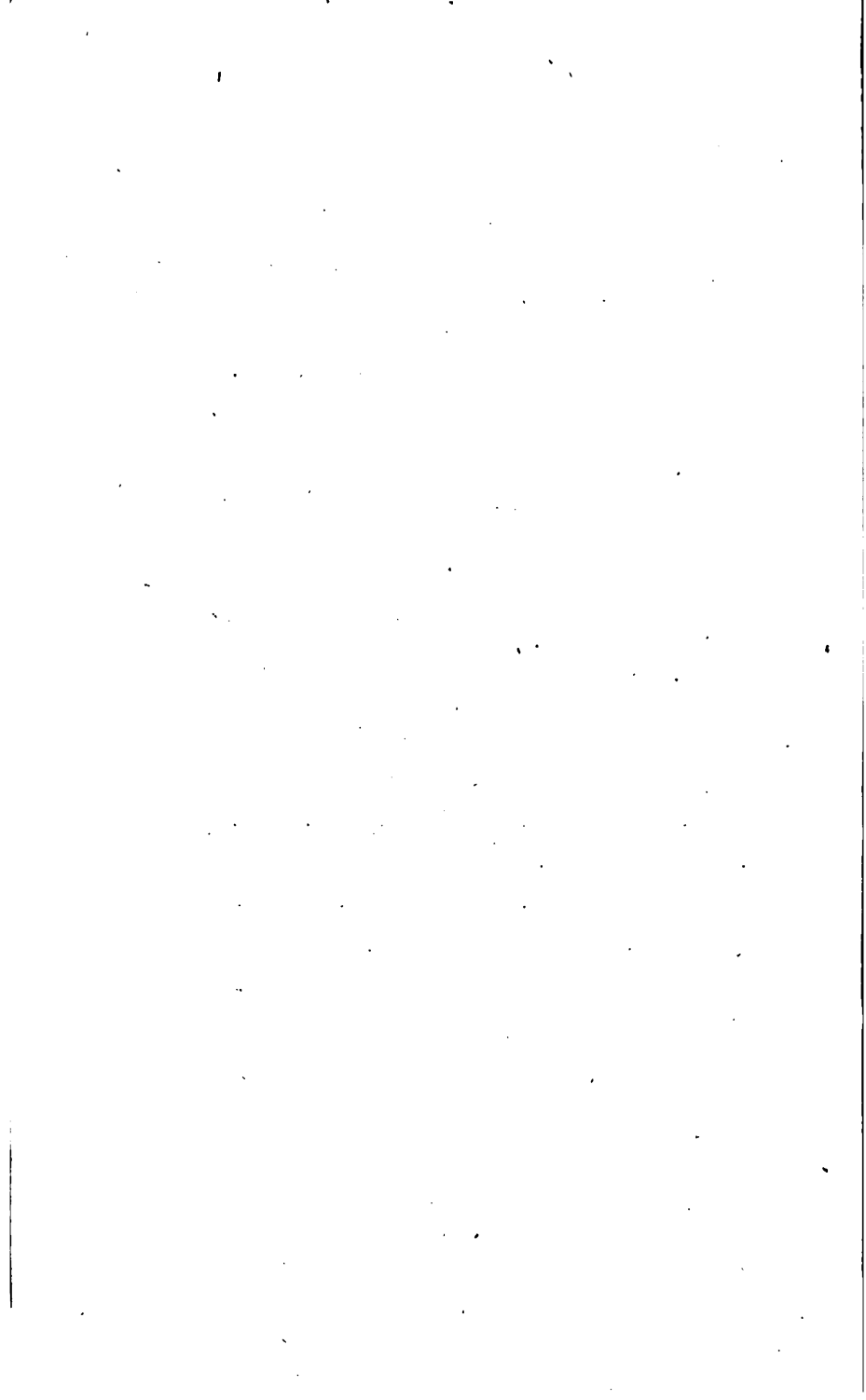
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P R E F A C E.

WHETHER the facts contained in these
Memoirs are *true*, or *false*, I know not :
nor will I take upon me to affirm, that the *cha-
racters* are *fancied*, or *painted to the life*. The
ambition of the Author is, not to be admired,
but to please. For the *sensible* only he writes :
of the *sensible* only he is desirous of deserving
esteem,

N. B. The Public are desired to take notice,
that the Satire against the Duke of C^{um}berland and
Lady G^{rosvenor}, was inserted by particular orders ;
of Lord G^{rosvenor}.



T H E
L O V E R S.

L E T T E R I.

Lady MARY H—, to Miss S—.

TO talk of scruple, sweet preacher, wait till
thou art no longer young, beautiful, or
lovely—at thy age, it is as impertinent a word
as pleasure upon the lips of a woman of forty.
Scruple has long ago taken its flight from the
polite regions I inhabit; the mighty god re-
VOL. II. B quested

quested, with such an insolence, the sacrifice of whatever offended his foolish delicacy; that had not we, people of fashion, disputed his sway, and turned his godship over to the vulgar, we would have led a life incontestibly ridiculous and miserable.

When dress, looks, visits, conversation, or amusements, are superintended by scruple, how the duce can a woman enjoy any diversion, or appear without either displeasing, or being laughed at? Who would be tempted to whisper in our ear, "I love you," were our features solely expressive of virtue? None certainly would say we are handsome, still less witty, should we make it our study to conceal every beauty, or talent.

The language of flattery and admiration, dear Jenny, is the only one a pretty woman should listen to———from morning till night to be told incessantly of the transports we cause———to behold a fiery eye devour the charms we display—the thought warms my soul with pleasing emotions. The sight of my

my bosom has made many a man sigh, and talk, who, had a silk handkerchief been thrown over it, would have kept the most insensible, and tedious breathing beings upon earth. I would not lose the privilege of speaking a *double entendre*, or giving to my form the countenance of seduction, for the respect of a world of fools.—What would that respect avail to my happiness? Do I live for them, or with them? No. Why then should I value the opinion of a society whose thoughts, manners, and feelings, are necessarily the reverse of my own? Did I consult the Duke of *Cumberland* upon the art of writing well, would you not think me mad? Pray, tell me the difference between the enemies of fashion, and that prince. The applauses of the members of the harmonic meetings satisfy the pride of a *Guadagni*, who would hardly nod a thank to the extatic compliments of a citizen. Of the real judges of graces, merit and taste, I am ambitious only to deserve the esteem. So long as the attention of a royal drawing-room shall center in me, I will smile at the declamations against coquetry and the desire of pleasing.

Women of rank or fortune, Jenny, are the legislators of wit, dress, and manners. Whoever acts in opposition to the laws they enact, might, if ill used by fortune at Almacks, retrieve his loss the next day, by exposing himself to public view. The Corsican fairy, and such other rare curiosities, are not so justly intitled to a numerous circle, as the man who dares to boast a behaviour we have not dictated. In favour of thy education, I forgive the word scruple ; but let me hear no more of it.

Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R I I.

Miss S—— to Lady MARY H—.

TWO women never differed so much in their way of thinking, as thou and I. Thy female *Coterie*, dear Mary, will not convince me that decency is a chimera, nor that fashion authorises what morality forbids. Be ever so strictly virtuous, if thy reputation is not free from blame, thy virtue is of no advantage to thee. A worthy young man frequents an agreeable but contemptible company—who will hesitate to conclude, that his heart is tainted with their vices? This is thy case—from thy society thou shalt be judged. Art thou not afraid of the consequences? Thou art not, since thou callest fools those, who grace not themselves with thy imprudence and levity. Mary, Mary!

beware

beware of the thorns concealed under the flowers thou treadest upon—look before thee ;—though the path be seemingly safe, and the prospect beautiful, they may put thee out of the way of happiness. Trust not to self-love ; it is a deceitful guide. While it is time yet, come back, and be the honour of a sex thy behaviour disgraces. This language, dear Mary, thy flatterers will not talk to thee ;—I am thy friend, they thy enemies ;—my interest is to see thee esteemed and happy, their's to abuse thy foibles, and make thee miserable. Seek not for generosity among men void of honour and veracity—their praise is thy satire—thy credulity their triumph. Could'st thou read in their hearts when they smile upon thee, thy soul would rise with indignation at their falsehood, and reason paint thy error in so lively a manner, as to bring thee forcibly to the sense of thyself. The aversion to discover the thoughts of their admirers has undone many women ;—intoxicated with the fume of the incense offered to them, they neither can, nor will distinguish between the lover and the man of gallantry ;—both homages are equally
received

received and welcome—Mary! never say thou art proud—pride bespeaks the respect of ourselves—thy conduct, forgive my freedom, betrays a meanness inconsistent with the dignity of a noble and rational creature.

Flattery, if I do not mistake the meaning of the word, is the praise of perfections we do not possess. Thus a *



That bewitching language has debauched the minds of half the women of the court, and made conjugal fidelity a phenomenon among the great.

Virtue is so much out of fashion, and adultery so universally encouraged, that I wonder how men dare to marry—how husbands do not keep their wives from the vortex of dissipation. To the simplicity our nation gloried in, have succeeded foreign manners, and with them all the vices attending idleness and luxury. The English

* Reader, you may guess what I do not choose to write.

lish women were, all over Europe, celebrated as much for their virtue and modesty as for their personal charms—the amazing indecency and effrontery with which they, now, appear in public assemblies——Mary! that I may not offend thee, I will write no more.

LET-

L E T T E R I I I .

Lady MARY H—, to Miss S—.

HADST thou written ten pages more, and dipt thy pen in the bitterest gall of satire, I would have read without the least emotion of anger, nay even thanked thee for the oddity of thy opinion. Dear Variety is my goddess: be her form ever so ridiculous, or hateful, she has charms, which delight my fancy.

The diversity of tastes and inclinations is no less pleasing to the mind, than that of features and dress is to the eye. To that dissimilarity, Nature has put in her works, we are indebted for the active, happy life we live. Lord! who could boast merit, talents, or beauty, were not those accomplishments set in the opposite view
to

to their contrast? Would every man in his sighs and looks tell me, "Lady Mary, I wish—I wish I were in your arms!" Was every woman as strikingly desirable and lovely? In pictures made by imagination, Jenny, we might alternately be one another's *chiaro oscuro*—in those created by taste, be sure I would always be the principal personage. The connoisseurs of female worth exist only within the atmosphere of St. James—every where else it is absolutely unknown. We are the sole spring from whence flows the art of improving the gifts of nature and education: as the virtuosi go to Italy for *tableaux* and *antiques*, men and women must come to us for their deportment and manners—unless they be animated to the fire of our genius, and copy us so exactly, as to be thought to belong to our *corps*, they shall invariably remain a graceless lump, moving, talking and acting without any life, propriety, or spirit.

Thy natural accomplishments, Jenny, are feelingly excellent: Were they not murdered by prejudices, I know no beauty, however so proud,

proud, who would not yield to thee. As thou art, thou makest none of us jealous: We can praise thee without hurting ourselves.—Does a man gaze upon thee, immediately on thy cheeks flies a crimson hue—does he commend thy gait, from that moment thou canst not walk—a word on thy wit makes thee silent—If at that time of thy unaccountable confusion, Jenny, thou didst step to the glass, at the sight of the awkwardness spread all over thy countenance, thou wouldst bid thy preposterous modesty away. ^{say} Tell not thou wouldst calmly behold thy deformity—Before thou venturest the bold assertion, reflect thou art a woman—that a woman's heart is almost made up of pride and self-love, and that, though virtue will not suffer thee to swerve from thy duty, there are sensations, which, being totally independent of her, will create our thoughts, and command our behaviour.——

With the air, Jenny, women breathes the desire of pleasing. Our blood impregnated with that desire circulates its spirits through every vein, and gives life to every organ. From the
want

want of reflection, or the power of circumstances we are liable to perpetual mistakes on the real cause of the sudden, or contradictory expressions of our looks, speech, silence or gesture. Those indiscreet betrayers of our inward emotions seem, Jenny, to a girl of thy cast, to borrow their language from thy indifference or modesty; but to me, who see thee in a proper view, they appear dictated only by the desire of pleasing. If ever thou attemptest to argue me out of this truth, I will evince thy folly, and make thee ashamed of thy ignorance—this minute I will not reason—I have a very dismal event to relate——a very dismal one indeed!



After three weeks of continual messages to a French *friseur* of the greatest celebrity, I was so happy this morning as to possess him for four hours. I was taken up with the elegant,
grand,

grand, and wonderful work he had raised over my head, when a favorite Canary bird came unluckily to perch upon a lock of hair, and with the frolicksome fluttering of his wings surrounded me in one instant with a cloud of powder. At first I smiled at the ridiculous effect of the little creature's wantonness——my philosophical indifference did not last long——I was soon ready to die in an agony of sorrow. Pomatums and essences Monsieur had so lavishly filled my hair with, that the bird's legs were unluckily fastened by them. The pain he felt, adding to his thoughtlessness, he made so ill contrived attempts to disengage himself, that he could not effect his escape but at the expence of a curl, which for twenty minutes had employed all the art of Monsieur. The sight of the ruins threw me immediately into a vacuity of sentiment——I mechanically screamed, rang the bell, and fell half fainted in the arms of my waiting woman. My silence and despondency alarming her, she repeatedly begged to know what ailed me.

“ Don't you see Lucy ?

“ What

" What madam ?

" My hair——

" Good God ! What devastation ! Who caused it ?

" The Canary bird——

" I will kill him——

" Do.——

The poor harmless animal would have been the victim of her unmerciful officiousness, had not the hope of restoring the curl to its former beauty, awaked my humanity. I interposed, and the bird was saved.

I sat down at my toilet, trembling, anxious, utterly ignorant how to begin, and execute the repair I undertook. Three times I was nigh bringing it to perfection——three times a cursed disappointment forced me to lay before the glass breathless through impatience, my arms across my bosom, and despairing of success. Lucy offered to go to Monsieur, and compel him ^{to come} back ; but where could she find an artist, who, had he had it in his power to multiply himself,

himself, would have been, in fifty places at once, so universally was he admired, desired, and sought after?—We began again, and had almost set the obstinate curl in its proper form, when came into the room a loving, creeping, flattering old fellow, whom his unlucky fate has made fall desperately in love with me. At any other time I would have been glad to see the doating fool; but I was then so extremely busy and perplexed, that I could not help exclaiming against the impertinent intruder. My accent and frowns spoke the more sensibly the confusion of my mind, and the wish of being left alone, that, at the sight of him, Lucy having unfortunately lost hold of the curl, I looked upon him as the cause of the fatal accident.

“What puts you out of humour lady Mary?

Be a woman's foibles ever so conspicuous, Jenny, she will not be told of them—to her truth is as odious as it is to a king—who will welcome a reproach though indirectly made?
 —A being divested of self-love—Where is
 that

that being? I am afraid he is to be found only in the ideal republic of Plato.

I darted at general Sc—— a glance of contempt, and the man feigning not to understand it, drew nearer me and repeated his senseless question.

“ Before you came, Sir, I was chearful and
“ happy—since I am no longer so, to your
“ presence the change must be attributed.—

The general bit his lips with indignation.

“ From you to me, my lady, such a compliment?——

“ From you to me, Sir, such a question?—

“ By inquiring into the cause of your too
“ visible uneasiness, could I offend your delicacy? Is not my concern a feeling natural to
“ a real friend?——You are a prey to sorrow—

“ Impudent! muttered I.

“ Would you, my lady, have forgiven me
“ had I been insensible of it?”——

“ As

“As my answer, Sir, might prove disagree-
“able, do not beg of me to make it.”

Then turning from him, I bid Lucy to exert all her skill in the mending of my hair. The general spoke—I was deaf. He thought it very odd that a lock of hair should rob him of my attention.—A lock of hair! is that nothing? At last exasperated at my silence and scornful neglect of him, he stole away, swearing as he went along, that “the woman, “who could sacrifice his conversation to her “vanity was not worthy of him.” I paid his impertinence with a peal of laughter, and let him go.



General Sc——, Jenny, is an old man of immense property, most of which he has obtained by a prudent management of the four aces. His campaigns in the fields of gallantry have betrayed in him a want of delicacy and generosity——his name is as unpopular among

C

among the fair, as that of lord Bute is among the city patriots. By the choice of the objects of his amours, and his manner of rewarding them, he has proved that Scotch œconomy was not a fable. Till he saw me, cards and dices took up his thoughts, and created his feelings——woman to him was only a relaxation after the fatigue of the gaming table——I have revenged my sex, dear Jenny, and made that man my slave, who had so long defied the power of beauty. He is rich, I am poor—I am young——Is he not a bold man to venture on a bride of my youth and gaiety? It is his business to think of it——mine is to make a fool of him. Adieu.

L E T.

LETTER IV.

General Sc——, to EDWARD D——, Esq;

THE greatest misfortune a man of my age and character could be cursed with, dear Ned, was to fall so desperately in love with a coquette, as not to be able to find a remedy in her folly. I am sensible of lady Mary H—y's imperfections, yet I continue to adore——— nay, to incense the very faults I condemn, in vain does reason tell me that a man near his great climacterick is not a tempting object for the eye of a maid of seventeen—that my feelings cannot be returned by a woman, who, of all things, loves herself the best———At the sight of lady Mary, the fever of passion increases, and reflection dies away.

Nature has wrapt her up in the veil of seduction, and art worked it with unspeakable charms—through my senses she strikes at my heart, and gives it the impulse she pleases. In her presence, dear Ned, I am a slave, delighted with the fetters I wear—and will not think of liberty.—— Possessor of the bewitching girdle of Venus, lady Mary is all grace, beauty and temptation.—— When she smiles, sings, walks, or in a wanton frolick suffers me to steal one kiss, I forget she is false and indifferent. There is in her eye a melting softness—an expression in her features—a mixture of lily and rose in her complexion—a wantonness in the play of her limbs, which my reason cannot withstand.

That lady Mary has no inclination for me, I cannot doubt—the world of adorers, who throng to bring at her feet their tribute of admiration, are equally favoured by her——no more than they have I her partiality to boast.—— I complained yesterday of her behaviour——

“ Civility,

“ Civility, answered she, obliges me to be
 “ polite to all men, and decency not to mark
 “ openly the preference I give to you over
 “ them.

“ But they talk of love, and you listen to
 “ them.——

“ Am I to be blamed for their impertinence?
 “ What woman is not hourly exposed to a de-
 “ claration of love?—If men will speak, how
 “ can I make them silent?

“ I have seen you taken up with the con-
 “ versation of a coxcomb.—

“ More likely, Sir, with the means of getting
 “ rid of him.——

“ Are you not at all places of public di-
 “ version perpetually surrounded by fulsome
 “ beaux, or contemptible rakes? How often,
 “ out of respect for my self have I not been
 “ forced to give you the slip, and look for a
 “ more discreet, or agreeable company?

“ You might as well, Sir, bid me to stay at
 “ home, as to arraign my conduct abroad.
 “ There are duties imposed by fashion, or
 “ custom,

“ custom, which, though I esteem you, I will
 “ not violate in your favour.——Can you
 “ say I am the only woman, who sacrifices her
 “ tastes to fashion ?

“ You are not, my lady ; but between you
 “ and most of them, there is this material dif-
 “ ference—they appear to yield to fashion with
 “ reluctance, and you to comply cheerfully
 “ with it.

“ You intended a stroke of satire, and you
 “ have praised me. Were I certain that there
 “ is any evil in an innocent mirth or coquetry,
 “ both would immediately give way to reserved-
 “ ness and dignity—I would scorn, Sir, to imi-
 “ tate the women you commend, and act in a
 “ manner my reason could not justify.

“ You are not judged, dear Mary, from your
 “ thoughts, but from your deportment.

“ Pray, Sir, in what am I blameable ?

“ Should I say it, you would be angry.——

“ Were I guilty I might not forgive—con-
 “ scious of my innocence I will hear you calmly
 “ ——speak—— fear not.——

“ Your

"Your deportment betrays an indiscreet,
"vain and self conceited soul.

"Thank you for the compliment.

And she walked with indignation in her
steps.

"I knew you would be displeased——

"What you have said, General, does not
"vex me——your words are destitute of mean-
"ing——I may, surely, question the infal-
"libility of your judgment, when you have
"so grossly mistaken the shadow for the reality
"of my character.——that a man of your
"good sense and experience should fall into
"such an error is truly amazing——this is the
"cause of my displeasure; I know no other.—

"It is the public and not I, who sees you
"in that light.——

"Charge not the public with your conceits—
"jealousy held the pencil when you drew my
"picture.

"Would I were persuaded you were right!
"I would have foibles rather than you should be
"thought to have any.

"Since

“ Since you can form so preposterous a wish,
 “ I must cease to wonder at the injustice of your
 “ suspicions, and your want of sagacity——
 “ you wish to have foibles! Is this your way of
 “ flattering me? To suppose I could give my
 “ hand to the man I should despise! Upon my
 “ honour, Sir, you are not happy either in your
 “ manner of wishing, or of complementing
 “ me——drop a subject you cannot treat
 “ with glory to your self——I will hear no
 “ more of it.

“ That lady Mary should speak so well, and
 “ act so ill!——

“ That General Sc—— should love me, and
 “ yet endeavour to deserve my hatred! Awake
 “ not pride, which my esteem of you has lulled
 “ asleep in my heart——don’t abuse my
 “ good nature——to-morrow I may resent,
 “ what to-day I am inclined to forgive.

“ O! Mary, Mary! let not deceit flow from
 “ thy lovely lips——Talk me not into a faith,
 “ which, should one day my credulity vanish,
 “ would make us mutually miserable——out.
 “ of.

“ of pity for your self dissemble not——be al-
 “ ways true——the errors springing from fa-
 “ shion are easily forsaken when the heart is
 “ swayed by virtue——if you love me, you will
 “ not feel the sacrifice of them.

“ Still incredulous !

And the haughty lady Mary darted at me
 such a glance——O Ned ! My heart bled
 at the thought of having offended——I fell
 on my knees——recanted——I on my
 knees ! Despise me not——The pen drops at
 the remembrance of my defeat and her triumph.

L E T-

L E T T E R V.

Miss B——, to Lady MARY H—Y.

CHARMING place this *Bath*! in London woman is the slave of decorum and formality—here she riggles about under the dress and countenance of fancy. Wherever I go, Pleasure attends upon me—if I am remarked, or spoke to, it is to be flattered, or admired. The principal business of men in this terrestrial elysian field, is to talk of love—that of my sex to answer them—and it is said, how *a propos* I know not, that Cupid's language is so easily pronounced and understood, that it does, more effectually than the waters, restore the female *malades* to the bloom of youth and health. Where do they not slander, dear Mary? Since
even

even malignity adorns the sermons of most of our very pious men, shall I wonder at the tottering reputation most of women here are complimented with? Not I indeed! I mind defamation as little as I do the affected frowns of a prude at a whispering Beau. Let men slander, let her blush, if such is their pleasure—the foolish creatures will deceive no body; for, who the duce will now find in words, or a blush, the characteristic of veracity and virtue? Appearance is the criterion of innocence or libertinism, no more than a large wig or a grave face is that of equity or wisdom. Many fools and knaves have I known, who at their looks passed for as many men of sense, or probity.

The manners of the age pointing to every individual the mask he must wear to be, when he pleases, the contrast of himself, it is almost impossible to form a just judgment of our morals, feelings, or merit. The coquette flutters about, guarded against calumny by her levity and indifference; and the woman of gallantry enjoys with impunity, under the features of a
 wit,

wit, or a devotee—thanks to the opinion the wise world entertain of women—we might, thou and I, sacrifice every day to Venus, and not be suspected, whilst the most insignificant smile ranks often a virtuous wife among the profligate. The advantage is so much in our favour, dear Mary, that I will not upbraid men with their inconsistency, however impertinent and absurd, still less reclaim them from so beneficial an error. According to the received notions in society, the imprudent only in either sex can be deservedly hung out the scorn of the public—thus Lady Grosvenor is disgraced, when our lovely friend Lady Ligornish is thought an honour to the Court. Thou seest, Mary, that discretion is almost the sole good quality a woman ought to possess, and that false steps, unless they be known, are of no disadvantage to the guilty. Conjectures are nothing—What but conjectures give life to slander, when the charge it makes is unsupported by evidence? To that want of evidence Lady Rodney is indebted, for classing still with the virtuous—so long as she is, with thousands, the object of censure, and no positive

positive fact is laid against her, what matters it whether she be praised or despised?

The Belles at Bath seem to have adopted my opinion of conjectures. Their mien bids defiance to slanderers: fearless of the shafts of envy, or malice, they partake heartily of every diversion, and ogle, and whisper, and smile, and have their *têtes à têtes* at home, and their *levees* in the public rooms. When every woman has her share of defamation, they all keep countenance one to another, and form a majority, which must triumph over truth or calumny.



The greatest enemies of our sex, Mary, are not the men we hate, but those we love. Let the former be ever so seemingly impartial in their censure their spite is easily seen through the veil of their feigned indifference. The indiscretion of our lovers accomplish in one minute what the pen or tongue of a vindictive man could not perform

perform in ten years. I need not, dear Mary, prove my assertion with instances : a girl of thy understanding perceives distinctly that a fortunate lover is easily believed.

I wish men were dumb when——What avails to form a wish, which, were it realised, would still be of no effect ? Should men lose the powers of speech and writing, their features would as plainly betray our foibles for them. A discreet lover is as rare a being as a coquette, who does not boast her triumph over a rival beauty. I love thee well, dear Mary ; but had I roped thee of half a dozen of admirers—I will not tell thee the consequence ; thou mayest guess it. How we can willingly give way to a vanity destructive to our happiness is astonishing. There is a meanness in our nature, Mary, which braving pride and self-interest compels us to behave in direct opposition to prudence and reason. Were it not so, would a lover venture the loss of his mistress, or expose her to contempt for the insipid satisfaction of telling the conquest he has made—and we cease to be friends for a victory
neither

neither of us would, the next day, esteem, or glory in? I have heard of men and women whose souls were free from that folly—I think that like the politically made Saints by the Pope, as an encouragement to piety, they take their origin from the brains of a well-wisher to society; for where can I look for that pretended perfection? Did it exist, it would certainly have attracted my notice. If more happy than I, thou knowest a woman possessor of that phoenix, name her, Mary, that her example may induce me to imitate her——Thou wonderest at my resolution! I will justify it to thee——seven o'clock! heavens! I am not yet dressed for the ball——not one minute more can I give to thee.

Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R VI.

Miss S——, to Lady F——.

My Lady,

YOU ask me if I love——Pll answer you with sincerity, I love not. The cause of my indifference I am a stranger to. I would be tempted to find it in my prudence, supported by your counsels, were I not perpetually told that reason is defenceless against the attacks of passion. So many instances are daily given me of its power, that I must either despise many a sensible woman, or believe the assertion to be true. The tender, delicate, generous Lady Sarah B——ry flying from the best of husbands ——the Countess P——cy submitting to the disgrace of a separation——the Dutchess of Gr—— sacrificing pride

pride and grandeur to the Earl of ~~Upper Ossery~~
 Several more, dear aunt, could I name, whose
 souls have been forcibly led astray——whose
 souls withstood the poison till its malignity in-
 vaded the heart, and became incurable.

Had I seen the man fate has predestinated for
 my lover, I fear I could not boast my insensi-
 bility.—My heart is Nature's work—my reason
 that of education——the latter advises: the for-
 mer commands.

Though I believe that sentiment, like a smell,
 makes upon us impression it is not in our power
 to avoid, I am conscious we are able to modify
 their effects, and make them either useful or
 inoffensive; as by removing from a noxious per-
 fume we get rid of the intoxication it had caused,
 by reflecting on the consequences of an unusual
 feeling, we may moderate its vivacity, and stop
 its progress. An emotion scrutinized at the first
 minute it is felt, gives easily way to reason en-
 lightened by self-love, and the respect of our-
 selves. If seduced by its delight we imprudently
 indulged it till it has taken so deep a root as

not to be extirpated, it is then productive of innumerable evils. Hence, so many marriages seemingly formed by a mutual esteem and tenderness, have soon no other attendants than a mutual contempt and sorrow——hence the wanderings of wives, and the libertinism of husbands—the experience, which the frailties or misfortunes of others have given me, will guard your Jenny against them, and make her worthy of you.

I am, dear Aunt,

Yours, &c. &c. &c.

JENNY.

L E T-

L E T T E R V I I .

EDWARD D——, *Esq;* to General Sc——.

THAT thy passion for Lady Mary has made a fool of thee, I need not prove.— How easily duped a wise man! it seems that, more purposely than the stupid, he is created to be led in strings by the crafty and artful. Any one endowed with only the tenth part of thy sagacity would, long ago, have been reclaimed from his folly. Talk not of love——leave that language to the imprudent and thoughtless, who want to justify the badness of their choices. Since, though sensible of the levity and falshood of Lady Mary, thou canst not recover thy liberty, leave London and come to me. Absence, and new objects will gradually erase her from thy

D 2

mind.

mind. Thy amorous disease is fed by her presence; hadst thou the resolution to avoid it for a few days, of Mary thou wouldst forget the charms——of Mary thou wouldst remember the defects only. Passions, dear Jack, take a new turn in the calm of solitude. Ambition, which at St. James creates every thought of a courtier, viewed at a proper distance, appears a fool's bauble——Avarice, the most obstinate of the follies mankind are disgraced with, far from the objects which give it life, dies imperceptibly away, and dwindles at last into a desire of enjoying——Lady Mary uncourted, or unadmired would lose her coquetry——when ambition, avarice and vanity would necessarily yield to time and reflection, doubt not their power over love. Of all passions love is the most changeable: I speak from experience, and will evince my assertion with one fact.



I had been three months enamoured of a young, witty and lovely widow, who, I fancied, returned my feelings, and wished for the wedding day. Reason agreeing with my inclination,

I was

I was the happiest of men. We were one morning exchanging the assurances of a mutual attachment, when her milliner entered the room. She brought fans, and Mrs. Har—— begged I would tell her my taste : I chose one, and presented it to her ; she shook her head, and laying the fan by her, smiled “ I do not like it.” I picked out another, then a third, then a fourth——the same smile again, “ I do not like it.” There was but one fan left, and that only pleased Mrs. Har——’s fancy. She wondered how I could overlook the beautiful thing, and prefer the others to it. That fan, was so palpably inferior in elegance, richness, and design to its unjustly neglected companions, that I durst arraign her judgment, and set up my own against it. Mrs Har—— appealed to the milliner, who did not fail to pronounce in her favour. I challenged her sentence ; at that very minute the celebrated *Powell* coming in, my sprightly widow stepped to him with a familiarity offensive to my delicacy, told him the debate between us, and made him the judge of it. Powell took the fan, and after having viewed and compared it with

with the others upon the table, confirmed the milliner's decision—then Mrs. Har—— exclaimed——

“ Now, Sir, what will you say ?

“ Say, madam ! that Mr Powell and the
“ pretty Miss are your complaisants.——

“ You will not own that my choice is better
“ than yours ?—

“ I neither can, nor will.——

“ You are immensely polite.—

“ I am true, and never will be false to be
“ civil.—

Mrs Har—— laughed at my repartee; and Mr Powell feigned not to have heard it. I staid a few minutes longer, then retired, not as I came, but calm, indifferent, careless of the woman I had adored an hour before. My spite at her partiality for Powell changed instantly my passion into dislike——my reason had not the honour of my love—to self-love I was indebted for it.

Hadst

Hadst thou not known Mrs Har —, thou mightest attribute my recovery to her want of charms, or lay it to the account of my insensibility wert thou not acquainted with my character. The widow was as attractive as Lady Mary, and I as tender and sincerely smitten as thou art. Surprised at the novelty of the alteration in my feelings, I put off the scrutiny of it till the next day, when, to my unspeakable satisfaction, I found that the wound I had received from Cupid was perfectly healed.

Many a lover, dear John, have for a less cause than a fan or a Powell shaken off the yoke of infatuation, and forsaken the mistress who had long been the delight of their hearts. A smile to a coxcomb will often rob a woman of the affections of a man of sense. Pride does not value a favour bestowed upon the unworthy—of all human beings I know but the courtiers base enough to welcome gifts, which spring solely from caprice. No more shouldst thou regard the kindness of a coquette than thou dost the liberality of some princes: both are equally below
the

the attention of a man of thy feelings and honour.

I have observed Lady Mary, dear John—— thou canst boast only the appearance of an attachment, which Lord C—— possesses in reality. Would his Lordship talk of marriage thou wouldst soon be dismissed from her presence, or be the sport of her wanton mirth, and waggish disposition. To his silence, and thy fortune, thou owest the distinction with which she receives thee. The fear of infamy supports her virtue against her Lover, married to thee that fear would vanish, and yield to passion. This truth friendship bids me to tell thee—like a blind man thou wantest a guide—I would despise myself, did I not, through the dread of displeasing thee, warn thee of thy danger, and save thee from it.

Adieu.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Lady MARY H—, to Miss B—.

THE unfeeling and thoughtless are undoubtedly the happiest creatures upon earth. Would, Amelia, I had thy head and heart! Passions poison not thy pleasures—thou enjoyest each sensation pure, unmixed with pain—no other objects partaking with thyself thy care and attention, they all are subservient to thy tastes and affections—fortunate Amelia! Every day opens for thee with a new scene of delights; and when it closes, it leaves thee in the arms of a sleep neither love nor ambition can disturb—would I had thy head and heart!—With thee I never dissembled—in me thou hast seen the woman of nature, whilst to the indifferent I shewed only the woman of fashion—though a stranger to
the

the tumultuous emotions, which animate my heart, thou always pitiest me with the sympathy of a friend, who labours under the same disease—not once hast thou reproached me for indulging sentiments modesty forbids me to entertain—Thy philosophy laughs at self-denials, when our wants, unknown to all the world, may be gratified.——I am of thy opinion; but where is the man we may safely trust with our reputation? Were it not for my fear of Lord C——’s indiscretion, I know not——it might happen,——indeed, Amelia, I would not answer for my virtue——there are times when my senses would betray me in his arms, did I not, at the very minute of danger, recollect its consequences, and gather an invincible strength from the thought of them. No other check do I know to my desires—religion has no such power over me. Whether it be the fault of education, or of my intercourse with the world, I cannot determine; but certain am I, that religion neither influences my conduct, nor helps me to my triumph over my lover.

Moral

Moral conversations are so carefully avoided, and freedom of speech so openly encouraged in the polite circles, that a young woman of rank is denied the liberty of choosing between them. Either she must forsake the company she is born to live with, or adopt their wit, behaviour and manners. The habit of prostituting our reason to trifles, or topics virtue condemns, grows imperceptibly so strong, that like the dust before the wind, the principles imbibed in our infancy vanish before the dictates *du bon ton*: those principles, through the badness of modern education, slightly printed on our minds, hold not against the most insignificant whim—a compliment upon our charms, may for ever erase their sacred characters.——Such reflexions, Amelia, are the dreams of people, who having it no more in their power to enjoy, turn misanthropes as we do devotees, to be still something in society. I listen to them no more than I do to a blind man, who talks of colours. Neither frivolity nor dissipation are enemies to virtue and religion: our deviation from them is the work of knowlege and reflexion. Had not Rochester,

Locke,

Locke, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Rousseau, published philosophical works, we would probably make to the apprehension of hell, the sacrifices we make now only to the respect of ourselves. Were we as fearless of the contempt of the world as we are of the devil, that man should be bold indeed, who would swear to the chastity of his mistress, or the fidelity of his wife!

The aversion of Lord C—— to marriage, his love for me cannot destroy. He says, he would infallibly hate me in a fortnight were he my husband. How could he discern between my love and duty? Love only can make him happy and constant—would you long value, dear Mary, a good from which you could never part? A wife cannot create a new sensation—obliged to grant, her favours are hardly tempting, or desirable. A mistress has always the same charms: she is a treasure, which the fear of having it stolen, makes every day more dear and precious.

That language, Amelia, I constantly answer with an explicit frown—a frown does not silence his Lordship—he will talk, and look me into
 a belief

a belief of his tenets—if to words he adds a carefs, the blush of indignation tells him to stop : sometimes that blush is understood—oftener it is not—then—my foolish soul sympathising with his own, I——Amelia ! it is not an easy task to conquer.——His detestation of matrimony is inexpressible.——I have attacked his sensibility with all the art I am mistress of——made him thirst after my possession——inflamed his spirits to a keen want of enjoyment—in spite of the delirium of his senses, his reason keeps calm——he speaks of raptures—not one word of marriage.——I must be bewitched since I can forgive——nay, love him still after his contempt of me.——When he offends I am readier to encourage than to check his attempt——Victory it is true declares always for me—What victory ? When I think of the advantages he gains before he is beaten out of the field, I cannot boast that victory.——Had I beauty without a name, how quickly I would surrender ! My name is the sole support of my virtue—that name I must change—Lady Sc— will not have the scruples of Lady Mary H—y.

L E T-

L E T T E R IX.

Lord C——, to the Earl of W——.

My Lord,

WERE I a beggar, or a spendthrift, your threatenings might induce me to sacrifice my opinion to yours, and make my reason the slave of your fancy—my fortune being more than sufficient for my wants or desires, I will think or act as I please, fearless of your indignation and anger. Neither ambition, nor avarice, my Lord, harbour in my breast—you may smile or frown, I shall continue free and independant. The liberty I enjoy I would not part with for all the favours a sovereign can bestow—the dignity of man shall not be disgraced by me. Should you be provoked at my firmness, I would think a further correspondence needless, for I give you my honour that I
will

will never rescind the resolution I have formed. Judge not of my thoughts and feelings from your own, my Lord; though young I have experience——by experience alone I will be advised: it is the sole mentor that cannot deceive me. How could you know better than I what is conducive to my happiness? Have you my heart? Do the same spirits, which circulate in my veins circulate in yours? If our tastes and inclinations are the reverse of each others, our judgment must necessarily differ. Music creates every day contradictory effects: what is harmony to me is found only to another's ears——Who would not laugh at us should we mutually pretend that our organs ought to feel in the like manner?

To you, my Lord, marriage appears surrounded with flowers——to me crowded with thorns——either give me your eyes, or insist no longer upon my seeing as you do.

I am with respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble

and obedient servant,

C——.

L E T.

LETTER X.

General Sc——, to EDWARD D——, Esq.

I ABANDON to thy satire, Edward, the person, wit, understanding, and manners of Lady Mary—those criticise at thy pleasure; thou hast my leave—but, respect her virtue: beggar her not of the sole charm she really possesses. My observations, though made with the eye of self-interest, do not agree with thine. Lord C—— is an object on which her coquetry works—her heart is in an absolute rest, whilst her mind seems totally taken up with his homage, and the reception she gives it. His *têtes à têtes* with her are casual, and not premeditated—with these, chance favours sometimes one, sometimes another of her admirers—neither to him, nor to any one of them, has she
ever

ever whispered a *rendezvous*: her deportment is too free, I own; but women of fashion having a life peculiar to themselves, I can find fault with her on that account, no more than with a bishop for being animated by the cares and the ambition of a courtier.

The looks of Lady Mary, and Lord C—— belie the intimacy thou supposest between them. Were they lovers, long before now, they would have betrayed themselves——since he does not talk of marriage, she is not the object of his affections——since she looks upon me as her husband, he is indifferent to her——I'll say more Edward; should their affection be true, once my wife Lady Mary would be above the reach of slander. Her levity, though blameable, will not make her vicious——was she a prude, I might doubt her modesty——there is an affected reservedness in such a woman forcibly alarming——the heart of a coquette you read in her mien——I have read that of Lady Mary——her behaviour agrees with its feelings; the desire of pleasing and not love gives it the impulse.

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Thou

Thou impeachest the virtue of Lady Mary to induce me to hate her! friendship has carried thee too far——serve me not at the expence of thy honesty——add not wantonly to the catalogue of Lady Mary's faults——it is already too long——I know it, and yet I love! how weak I am! pity me, Edward——paint the danger of my passion in as lively a manner, as thy ingenuity will permit; but let truth hold thy pencil.

Adieu.

LET

LETTER XI.

Miss B——, to Lady MARY H—y.

“**L**ADY Sc—— will not have the scruples of lady Mary!” I believe thee—but that lady Mary H—y should fear to act like lady Sc—— I can hardly credit. Thy delicacy is the more impertinent that thou hast in thy very family examples of an open violation of decorum and virtue. Who has not heard of the amours of Miss Loc——, thy aunt, with her footman—of the amours of thy mother with lord H—e?—If thy preposterous apprehension is known, be sure that lady H—r—on will *blatk-ball* thee whenever thou offerest thy self for a member of the female cotterie—should she be asked the reasons of her vote against thee,
and

and tell them, thou would'st immediately forfeit the two thirds of thy importance, and thy claim to the courtier's homage—By favoring lord C—— thou art a gainer at every loss thou sustaineft.—Thou a lover! Never say it—the real votaries of Cupid think not of their reputation but to sacrifice it at his shrine—Were I lord C—, lady Mary, I would wish for—lady Sc— I would neglect. The conquest none can boast to have enjoyed, is only capable of tempting the ambition of a man of refined sensibility. Remember Miss *Hun—r*, and lord *Pem—*; had they been as discreet as they were tender and amorous, perfect happiness would perpetually have attended upon them—as thou hast not their romantic cast, thou mayst enjoy and defy slander.

What woman of fashion is now without her *cordials*, or her *dram-bottle*? though the fact be real, who can effectually charge any one of them with it? A lover, I own, cannot be conveyed in a closet as secretly as a bottle; but when he is there, may not his behaviour remain as great a mystery as the drinking of a dram?

A

All the sins, we have the words of, are daily committed—yet, how few the known delinquents! too much prudence has undone many a lover, who, had they thoughtlessly rushed into one another's arms, at every opportunity fortune gave them, would never had their intrigues made public. Lord C— entering boldly thy apartment at noon day saves thee from suspicion—should he seem to steal into it, all would think thee guilty though thou might'st be innocent. Actions deemed impracticable are the most likely to succeed. In love as in war the brave are always more fortunate than the prudent. The discovery of the amours among the *beau monde*, is owing to their excessive caution—they will love at hours, in places, and with circumstances, which necessarily betray them. Libertinism and cuckoldom are as much in vogue in the city as in the regions of Grosvenor Square—Why do we hear so seldom of an offending wife or daughter on the other side of Temple-Bar, and so often of so many on this side of it? Is the citizen of a more philosophical turn than the courtier? No. The
 lovers

lovers trust their happiness to chance, and ~~not~~ to their wisdom—hence only the scarceness of their detection, and the silence of slander.

Thy fear of infamy, dear Mary, is an affront upon thy ingenuity—there is not one individual living in society, who has not a secret to conceal from those he converses with—when people, who have not half thy discernment blind daily the superior sagacity of their observers, how canst thou be afraid of not intriguing with success? The fear of infamy is a *bugbear* that frightens the fools, and is laughed at by the sensible. Till it be impossible to keep our conduct private, the course of passions will not be stopped by the insignificant bars of opinion.

Did I write to an other woman than lady Mary H—y, I would forbear telling her my thoughts, lest they should induce her to venture upon a sea the most skilful are not always capable to weather—thou art too enlightened to adopt maxims thy judgment should not confirm. Adieu.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I I .

Miss S——, to Miss A——?

HOW our heads, dear Charlotte, differ so sensibly from those of our friends in London, is a riddle I cannot explain. Brought up with them our education has been the same: we have been taught that veracity and virtue were the greatest ornament of our sex—the sole accomplishments we ought to glory in. Conscious of this truth we act agreeably to it—— Why do lady Mary and Amelia B—— renounce principles we have made the rules of our life? I have heard them talk as I think—they were zealous devotees to religion—modesty shone triumphant in their features, and dictated their speech and behaviour—how altered now their language

language and countenance! In her letters to me I know only the hand of lady Mary H—y ——— Were it not for her hand, I would not believe she is the author of them. Her last, dear Charlotte, is a compound of indiscretion and folly——in vain does she adorn with wit and imagination the new maxims she has adopted; the drapery vanishes easily before the eye of reason.——A young woman priding in manners the profligates of the age only would dare to defend, strikes me with an equal mixture of wonder and indignation——friendship, Charlotte, must end where contempt begins ——— Contempt! Was I ever to use that word in speaking of lady Mary——Was she to deserve it! I would have sworn to the delicacy of her sentiments, to the chastity of her thoughts——My esteem for her was once adequate to her merit——her heart was then untainted with the foibles she indulges—to her reservedness has succeeded coquetry—to her discretion levity—to her horror for vice a taste for pleasure—in the vortex of dissipation she
whirls

whirls about forgetful of the dignity of her sex—of the duties prescribed by morality.—Fashion is the sole deity she serves, and adores—the female cotterie, the sole legislator of her manners.—The laws enacted by that modern society respective to dress, diversion, and the perfections essential to a woman, she obeys as implicitly as the slave, who has no other will than that of his imperious master. What society must that be, which the public have so often pronounced a scandal to the nation—whose majority live in open defiance to law and religion? Is there any wisdom to be got at the school of folly? Is it among rakes and adulteresses that virtue resides? My heart bleeds, Charlotte, at Mary's imprudence—I fear for her—example is contagious—passions are easily inflamed when countenanced by the great, and self-denial is ridiculed, or laughed at. If to the world of flatterers and knaves, lady Mary is daily surrounded with, I add pride, self-love, Nature, are not my apprehensions justified? How can a woman, half corrupted by the luxurious

urious life she lives, resist successfully so many
 enemies? It is only, dear Charlotte, in the
 continual practice of virtue we can find an
 arm against the seductions of vice?—The
 least straying from the path of honour may lead
 to infamy. Experience has evinced that truth
 ———Mary, Mary! Would I could reclaim
 thee from thy errors! Far from repenting she
 sollicit me to imitate her——she paints her
 situation with the most delusive colours——
 infatuated girl! She does not think of the
 serpent which lays under the flowers——I have
 warned her of her danger; she despises my
 advice. Lady Mary relies upon her prudence
 for her safety——since her prudence does
 not tell her to leave the career she has heed-
 lessly launched into, will it help her to come
 off conqueror of those, who with art, and
 discretion will enter the list against her?——
 The odds are not on her side—at the best, it
 is but a perhaps——to this poor security
 lady Mary trusts her fame and happiness!
 I know not how to act, dear Charlotte.——

My

My delicacy bids me to break with a woman I cannot esteem——a connexion with her may prove fatal to my peace——the world is so censorious!——Judge for me, and dictate my behaviour with lady Mary. Adieu.

LET.

L E T T E R X I I I .

Lady MARY H—y, to Miss B—.

FOR two days the dæmon of jealousy had taken such a possession of general Sc—, that all my art could not expel him——this morning only he yielded to the superiority of my genius, and then returned to the tartarean fields from whence I hope he never will come again. I have been within a hair's breadth of losing *mio caro amante*——the desire of making him a *marito*, Amelia, gave me a patience, a discretion and an apathy, which would do honour to the most perfect adept in the science of hypocrisy. The talent of putting off a lie for a truth, requires a presence of mind I never dreamt to be endowed with.

Chance

Chance, Amelia, performs in this world a more extensive part than it is generally believed —to him the learned are indebted for almost every useful discovery——he is the cause of every promotion at court——of the existence of almost every patriot ——Blind like Cupid he favours, or disgraces at pleasure——he makes the Reverend John *Horn* an Atheist, and the Countess of *Huntingdon* a devotee——a Lord *Nerth* prime minister, a Lord Ch—— a nobody——on the same seat he places the independent and the slave——in the *Coterie* Lady *H——rr——on*, and the Countess of *Carlisle*. In his or her hands, for, like the Chevalier *D'Eon's*, the sex of that deity is equivocal, fools, or men of merit rise or sink just as the whimsical god, or goddess perches them upon a North or a South wind——should not Chance create circumstances, which forcibly display our characters and abilities, we would certainly die, such is my faith, Amelia, without the knowledge of ourselves.——Had any body told me three days ago, that I could dissemble so well as to be able to persuade a man in his sober senses that he did not

not

not see what he really saw, I would have laughed at him, yet I have operated that miracle. Thanks, hearty thanks to Chance for having made me sensible of my capacity and merit!

Though I do not esteem much the sagacity of men, they are so intolerably impertinent when they get the better of us, either in argument, or justice of complaint, that I always enjoy with rapture the spectacle of their mighty wisdom dwindling into folly. An *enamorado* falling upon his sword at my feet, through the despair of pleasing me, would not be so agreeable a sight as is that of a rational man, who belies his senses to credit the error I want him to adopt. The more obstinate his incredulity, the greater my triumph. I do not wonder that Roman Catholics are so desirous of making proselytes: the absurdity of the tenets they teach is the sole spring of their unalterable zeal—there is an unspeakable pleasure in cheating mankind of their reason, and forcing them to believe in impossibilities. The catalogue of the fools we have made is always perused with delight—we all, Amelia, are fond of imposing upon one another:

another: this is so true, that tales are daily told of tricks we never played, of advantages we never gained——rather than to be thought stupid we will set up for knaves——I have heard a physician declare that he never would have had the honour of riding in his own coach, had he not convinced several healthy people of fortune that they were not well.——Did I choose to tell thee whatever I have heard, thou wouldst think that honesty is as great a chimera as ——
 —— fill the chasm, Amelia.



I had been as usual attempting the conversion of Lord C——, and quarrelling with him about his unjust and disrespectful behaviour——but as usual a reconciliation ensuing, the General stole into the room, just as our debate ended in an expressive kiss. At the sight of him, and the touch of my knee, his Lordship burst into
 laughter,

laughter, and asked if the anecdote he had related was not extremely ridiculous.——

“ Your manner of delivering it, my Lord, is
 “ still more so. Like a French marquis, you will
 “ act what you speak ; and I really know no-
 “ thing so foolish and troublesome. Look—
 “ you have almost spoiled my hair-dress, by whif-
 “ pering a nonsense you could have as well told
 “ loudly—Sir be pleased to sit down—

“ And, with a smile, I invited the General to
 “ partake of the sofa on which I sat. Then
 “ turning carelessly to Lord C——

“ A whisper, my Lord, however insignificant
 “ and authorised in Paris, is not looked upon
 “ with the same indifference in London—the
 “ higher your rank, the more conspicuously ci-
 “ vil and decent you ought to be—

“ Every day, madam, I am told I am an im-
 “ pertinent coxcomb—But as modesty permits
 “ me not to hear myself praised, I always slip
 “ away from my panegyrist—

“ Then

" Then bowing respectfully, he left me with
" the general. You are penfive, Sir—What's
" the matter with you ?—

" No--thing, Madam, nothing.—

" A nothing thus expreffed fignifies some-
" thing—are you not well ?

" I am.

" You are not angry with Lord C——'s
" whisper—are you ?

" A whisper, Madam !

" Yes—a whisper, Sir.—What fhould it be
" elfe ?

" A whisper ! I am not blind, madam—

" Did I fay you are ?—What do you mean ?

" Explain yourfelf.

" Madam, I have feen—

" What ?—

" You will deny it.—

" I hate to be kept in fufpence—be explicit—

" What have you feen ?—

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" No

“ No blush on your cheeks !—

“ Is that the charge against me ? Must I blush to please you ?—

And I breathed an ironical smile.

“ That look of innocence will not avail you, my lady—I cannot be deceived—

“ Are you acting in character, Sir, or do you mimick only ?—answer plainly ?—

“ In character, madam——

And he arose with indignation at my composure of mind.

“ I am not fond of a rehearsal, Sir—go to those before whom you are to perform—of general S——c, and not of a buffoon, I will receive the visits.——

The tone of dignity with which I spoke those words seemed to cool the flutter of his spirits—he stopp’d—looked as if he thought—then came to me.

“ I—no—

“ I—no——Vastly pretty, indeed !—is this a new language ?—how do you call it ?—

“ The

* The language of a mortal anxiety——

He bit his lips with fury, and turned again from me.

“ It will not take with the polite world—its expression is too harsh——The language of a mortal anxiety !——

“ How calm ! and yet—Adieu, madam.

“ Sir, sit down—be cool—tell me the cause of your grief.——

“ Be cool, you say to me !—

He paused, sighed, and faintly exclaimed—

“ Adieu, madam——

I made no reply—he left the room.

This is the first scene—the second you shall have in my next.

Adio, amico mio,

LET:

L E T T E R X I V .

Lord C—— to the Earl of W——.

My Lord,

YOU desire me to justify my aversion to marriage—I will do it in a few words—“I fear to be a cuckold”—“What! are all women wh——?” I do not say that, my lord: but as I am not sagacious enough to know the virtuous from the libertine, I shall not be so bold as to make a choice among them. When men, esteemed great connoisseurs in that matter, are daily the dupes of their knowledge, it would not become me to pretend to be more infallible than they. A novice in the science of women, I know no other difference between them, than that of their shapes and features—their heart is to me a mystery all the efforts of my reason cannot unravel.

The

The deportment of the fair is not the picture of their affection—often, too often, my lord, the looks of modesty conceal a depraved soul.—Who could boast the innocent countenance of Henrietta Vernon?—Lord Gr~~esvenor~~^{esrenor} thought to take an angel to his bed—he married only a woman disgraced with the feelings of a prostitute. Hundreds Lady Gr~~esvenor~~^{esrenor}s I could name you, my lord, who, had they even been really virtuous, could hardly, after a few months marriage, have escaped the contagion of libertinism. The poison of immorality is now as readily received, as it is prescribed—there are houses where it is openly sold, with authority—where female licentiousness is publicly encouraged. Cornely's enchanted palace, and the ladies cotterie, are institutions founded by idleness and luxury, and consecrated to vice and irreligion : I am a member of both, my lord, and am able to tell their good and evil ; their good is fictitious—their evil real. The circulation of money, the only good resulting from that modern place of polite entertainment, does not compensate for the metamorphosis it makes in the minds of most of the company.

Discre-

Discretion and virtue forsake a woman at the third step she makes in that temple, and leave her under the guard of Pleasure, who, from that moment to that she goes away, strikes her reason silent, and gives an active life to her senses. If on her return she finds again her discretion and virtue at the door, she has not herself to thank for them, my lord, but the indifference of men, or a want of opportunity. Had Mrs Cornelys private cells to shelter the amorous maskers, I fear that many a virgin, many a wife, would be tempted to pay, in them, their homage to Cupid. It would be a wonder if there were not—love, music, dance, wine, nature unite together to intoxicate their hearts—to make them forgetful of themselves—I'll say no more, my lord, to a man of your penetration.

I am, with respect, my Lord,

Your lordship's most humble

and devoted servant,

C——:

L E T.

L E T T E R X V .

Miss A——, to Miss S——.

CONFIDENT that Lady Mary deserves thy fears, I'll tell thee, dear Jenny—act as thy delicacy bids—The delicacy of a woman, when truly founded on virtue, cannot mislead her—should it be carried to extremes, the motive is her justification. Wouldst thou, yielding to the benevolence of thy heart, continue a correspondence with Lady Mary, in hopes her infatuation will one day give way to reason, thou mayst share in her shame if she does not reform—the possibility of being thought as blameable as she is, must strike thee with terror—I am certain thou wouldst be miserable, wert thou in the
least

least suspected!—the consciousness of her innocence is not a comfort for a girl of thy sensibility—unless the whole world be equally with thee conscious of it, thou canst not be happy.

A woman of Lady Mary's disposition ought not to be trusted with thy reputation—Beware to put thyself in her power—should she fall a victim to her negligence and thoughtlessness, thy name on her lips would stigmatize thee with disgrace—she could not, I own, charge thee with one single foible, or prove it if she did ; but the world is so censorious ! this observation thou hast written in thy last letter—let it, dear Jenny, be the guide of thy conduct.

Thou art not, dear Jenny, acquainted with Lady Mary H— : of her thou knowest only the pride and coquetry—learn that she is as false as vain. In my last journey to London I visited her with the familiarity of a real friend. With women, Mary's gaiety always happily blended with reservedness, compels you at one and the same time to love and esteem her. My mother was incessant in her praises of her, and more than
once

once wished for her Charlotte the charming vivacity of her friend. Among the admirers of Mary General Sc— was seemingly the man of her heart : but I soon perceived that Lord C— was her sole favourite. The air of mystery with which their mutual behaviour was marked, betrayed so sensibly their feelings, that I was amazed at the general's ignorance of them. I told Lady Mary the remark I had made—she shuffled me with an evasive answer—her want of sincerity, dear Jenny, made me suspicious, and I had the ingenuity not to conceal it.

“ Talk as you please, said I to her, you love
“ Lord C—

“ Suppose I do——what will you infer from
it?——

And a sneer.

“ A consequence not honourable to you—
“ Can you love his lordship, and deceive Gene-
“ ral Sc— ?

The honest roughness of my reply, forced a blush on her cheeks.

“ I

“ I deserve that compliment---I should at first
 “ have plainly told you I loved not Lord
 “ C——. Were I guilty of such meanness,
 “ I should be unworthy my Charlotte’s friend-
 “ ship.——

“ And you love him not really ?——

“ Doubt it not, Charlotte ; the general is the
 “ only man who has a claim to my heart, and to
 “ whom I am sincerely attached.——

I feigned to believe her, and the conversation took the old turn of esteem and confidence.

The next time I saw Lady Mary and Lord C——, their behaviour was so much the reverse of the past, that it increased my suspicion of their intelligence ; had I not spoke, they would have been less upon their guards—fearless of the spectator, they would have performed the same part again—this reflection, though conclusive, glanced only upon my mind—the apprehension of making a mistake injurious to Lady Mary, made me wait for a more convincing proof of their mutual attachment.

I was

I was one morning at breakfast with her, when, being desired to step down to her father, who wanted to speak to her, she left me by myself in her dressing-room. Darting my eyes round, I discovered a letter lying behind the glass upon her toilet. Curiosity, female impulse tempting me, I got up, took the letter, and read the direction to Lord C——.

To Lord C—— exclaimed I, with amazement.

The letter was not sealed—I did not think twice—I read the effusions of a heart passionately enamoured—Jenny! my soul roused with indignation—had Lady Mary come that moment I would have upbraided her with her duplicity—with her criminal conduct—Having time to look and reflect, I thought it needless to attempt to restore her to a sense of her duty. Lady Mary found me sitting at the tea-table when she entered the room. She was obliged to go to the dutchess of N———. I seized gratefully the opportunity she gave me to leave her—from that day, Jenny, I paid her visits of ceremony,
and

and none of friendship—that change in me she returned with an equal degree of indifference, till, leaving off all restraint, we became at last absolute strangers one to another. The General, his reason I know not, vexed at the discontinuance of my intimacy with Lady Mary, begg'd of me to tell him the cause of it—he loved, Jenny ; truth would have torn his heart with sorrow—I could not take upon me to disclose it to him—another motive forced me silent—it springs, perhaps, from a false delicacy—never ask what that motive is—I blush at the thought of it—oh, Jenny,—Jenny !—my heart—my poor heart—how it beats !

Adieu,

LET:

L E T T E R X V I .

Lady MARY H—Y, to Miss B—

(In continuation of her last.)

I CURSED the indiscretion of Lord C—, who had put me at the trouble of turning a sensible man into a fool—how the duce could I successfully perform the arduous task! I knew that a lover was a flexible wax in the hands of his mistress—that the day he gave her his heart, he yielded his judgment to her—What did all that signify? Had I had a fact, unknown to him, to evidence, I would have carried it with a high hand, however impertinent or marvellous it might have been—but to convince him that a kiss he had seen given me,

was

was a whisper only ! the metamorphoses was too extraordinary to be credited. “ Were I so
 “ happy as to make him believe it, exclaimed I,
 “ I would undoubtedly hold his reason in per-
 “ petual slavery—never would he dare to be free
 “ though the weight of his chains should intice
 “ him to shake them off—the habit of wear-
 “ ing them enervates necessarily the spirits of a
 “ man——he rather would believe his wife to
 “ be a Lucretia than to own he has been her
 “ fool.”

The lucky consequences of the General's credulity made me exert all my powers of artifice against him. Conscious that beauty speaks persuasion oftner than wit, I set off, the next day, my charms to the best advantage, and studied every delusive attitude of seduction. Thus in arms, and prepared for triumph, I waited with impatience the presence of the enemy. The two thirds of the day had already elapsed, and he was not come ! the fear of having lost him, began to intrude into my heart——six o'clock ! ——and not yet come !——he had taken such a leave of me the evening before——I
 reflected

reflected on that leave——it looked so much like an everlasting farewell that the certainty of it would have thrown me into vapours, had he not on a sudden made his appearance. I instantly recovered my courage, and was ready for the fight.

“ Alone, madam!——

He looked round him, as if in want of company.

“ Yes—alone, Sir.——If my company cannot make you happy, I’ll follow you down at my father’s.——

And I breathed a sigh—that sigh was not lost——led by a forcible impulse of love, he exclaimed——

“ I wish for no other company, dear Mary——

Then reflexion usurping one minute of command——

“ We will go down, madam——

“ Did you not say, Sir, you wished for no other company?——

The

The extream softness of my voice increased his trouble—he mechanically drew near me—took my hand—but as if it had been infectious, he on a sudden set it aside, and with a tear in his eye withdrew from me.

The scene commenced so pathetic that augu-
rating it would end in my favour, I resolved to
wrap it up in illusion, and work his memory
into an oblivion of the past.

I carried up my handkerchief to my eye—
my action forced a tender emotion from his
breast—I saw that emotion in the turn of
his head, and affected not to perceive it, that he
might indulge it the longer——

“ Would I had not come !——

And he reclined upon the back of a chair.

“ Such a wish formed by General S— !——

And false tears flowed down my cheeks—
the famous girdle of Venus, Amelia, was no-
thing else but the art of shedding tears—the
dropping pearl gives a lovely woman an attrac-
tion beauty alone has not. The General
moved

moved irresistibly by the spectacle of my sorrow came, knelt at my feet, and seeing the trace of a tear on my neck wiped it away with a trembling lip—I feigned not to feel the indiscreet kiss, and keeping artfully in the same situation left him at liberty to gaze upon my breast—its bewitching elasticity, the work of my hypocritical grief, soon invited his hand—he durst to glance one finger—I gently reprov'd him for his freedom, and desired him to rise—he hardly heard me—his soul was entirely taken up with the sight of my bosom—Perceiving that temptation enlivened his looks, and animated his lips, I arose seemingly offend-ed—he got hold of my hands, and printed a kiss upon them—

“ These liberties I suffer without anger, and
 “ yet you have wish'd you had not come !—
 “ I am too weak ——— you do not deserve
 “ my forgiveness—your behaviour since yester-
 “ day has made me miserable—justify your-
 “ self in justice to me—name my crime—

“ My confidence, Amelia, ought to have
 “ bespoken me innocent—should I have asked
 “ what my crime was, had I really been guilty?
 “ However forcible the presumption in my
 “ favour, it did not avail me. In spite of the
 “ present intoxication of his senses, the general
 “ could not forget what he had seen:

“ You will have me name your crime, ma-
 “ dam—I will name it—

“ Take care, Sir, not to lay a false charge
 “ against me—if you do, never will I forgive—
 “ let truth and not jealousy impeach me—

“ Who will judge between us?—

“ My sincerity—do you challenge it?—

“ Both judge and party, madam!—

And he shook his head.

“ Too long you have abused my good nature—
 “ Conscious of my innocence, I will not hear it
 “ called in question—

And again a false tear.

“ The

“ The ingenuity of your dejection confounds
 “ me—Could I think my eyes deceived me, I
 “ should be the happiest of men—

He paused, and seemed to recollect himself—

“ In vain do I desire to delude myself—the
 “ sense of my disgrace is too deeply engraved on
 “ my mind—Lord C—— you love—me
 “ you hate—I saw you both last night arm and
 “ arm—his lips upon yours—

“ Arm and arm—his lips upon mine!—
 “ Lord C——! the most odious and trouble-
 “ some of all my visitors—the man, whom, in
 “ your presence, I charged with indelicacy, and
 “ want of good manners!—so absurd an accu-
 “ sation is below my resentment—it makes me
 “ ashamed of my partiality for you—not one
 “ word more upon that subject, for I will not
 “ be the wanton sport of your jealousy—leave
 “ me—I can hardly forbear despising you—

I rung the bell; a servant came; I bid him
 to light the general down.

“ Pray, madam, send that man away—

“ Should

"Should any body come, Sir, your whisper
"might be as foolishly interpreted as that of
"Lord C——. I will not be whispered to—

"Let us, dear Mary, before we part, un-
"derstand one another—perhaps I was mistaken.

"Perhaps! you are very modest—you was
"but three minutes ago so certain of the fact—

"You have almost proved me I was wrong.—

"Almost!—I have no patience—add not, Sir,
"insult to insult——

And raising my voice——

"Come, Sir, let's go down——

And with a frown I stepped to the door. He
followed me, muttering curses against love and
beauty, and stammering the words Kiss and
Whisper, and the name of Lord C——.
When we got at the door of my mother's apart-
ment, the general stopped short—

"Will you forgive?—

"Will you never offend?—

"I have still that kiss of Lord C—— in
"my memory—I saw too well it was not a
"whisper—

His

His relapse, when I fancied I had cured him, put me absolutely out of humour. I turned from him with the supercilious look of contempt, careless of his love, or hatred. My indifference of either strongly marked in my countenance had more effect upon him than the counterfeit part I had acted before. I saw him ready to recant, to kneel for pardon.—had I, but in the least, softened my features, he would have confirmed my triumph—the haughtiness of my behaviour rousing his pride, he coloured with indignation, and rushed down the stairs raving mad at his folly.

I doubted no more of my conquest, Amelia : the man who wants to be deceived does not listen long to his reason—the disagreeable truth gives easily way to the flattering error—in this respect we all think, and act alike—he, who denies it, is a fool, or an impostor.

I was at my harpsichord the next morning when the general came to make at my feet the sacrifice of his understanding—as it was voluntary, I accepted it, and rewarded him with a
few

few smiles—and one kiss from my own lips—
 this favour, Amelia, was necessary to expunge
 effectually the cause of our quarrel out of his
 mind—it proved him my affection beyond
 the power of a doubt, for, agreeably to the
 general opinion, had I not loved him, decency
 would not have suffered me to grant it—Men
 are great fools! for thy benefit and mine, let
 them remain so. Adieu.

LET;

LETTER XVII.

EDWARD D——, *Esq;* to General Sc——.

LIKE an enthusiast, thou wilt make no use of thy reason but to defend thy folly—What religion is to him, lady Mary is to thee—no fault in either your deluded mind can, or will acknowledge.—Were I certain, dear Jack, that, to the end of thy life, thou wouldst entertain the delightful error, I would forbear undeceiving thee—But thou art a man—the same passion cannot always warm thy heart with an equal degree of vivacity—possession will necessarily abate its fierceness—once more cool, the mist Love has surrounded thee with will vanish—then the objects before thee will appear such as they really are—I must spare thee the odious spectacle—guard thee
against

Against the corroding sense of shame—the deadly pang of sorrow.

I say it again, lady Mary loves Lord C——, and is unworthy of thee—her soul is as corrupted as her heart——under the reverend Horne she has studied the system of Spinoza, and imbibed a contempt of religion——a woman without religion, wouldst thou take for thy wife?——if thou doubtest my assertion turn a free-thinker, and laugh with her at the superstition of mankind. The ambition of showing her wit and learning will immediately betray her sentiments: she will excel thee in boldness of argument, and impiety.

Remember the rupture of the sensible, discreet, and virtuous Miss A—— with lady Mary——thou alone mistook the motive—thou attributedst it only to a trifling, female caprice, whilst all those, who knew Miss A—— formed, from that moment, a bad opinion of lady Mary's character. At last our apprehensions alarmed thee so far as to engage thee to ask the cause to Miss A——. Her silence pronounced thy mistress guilty of some foible
unknown

unknown to thee, of some foible so inconsistent with virtue, that it had forced her to break with a woman she could no longer esteem. Had the quarrel been insignificant, or even the fault been her's, Miss A—— would have told it thee—though displeased, she would not have been unjust. Generosity bid her not to tell thee the truth—had she spoke it, the amours of Lord C—— and lady Mary would have been unravelled to thee.

This, I dare say, was the real cause of the difference between them. The discovery of the indecent, nay, criminal behaviour of lady Mary, offended the delicacy of Miss A——, and made her forsake a connexion equally dangerous and disgraceful.

As neither my word, nor the conduct of Miss A——, will persuade a man, whose infatuation is so deeply rooted, I will seek for proofs in facts so unquestionably credible, that it shall not be in thy power to refuse thyself to conviction.

To-morrow

To-morrow I'll post away to Bath, and in thy favour metamorphose myself into a lover. Miss B—— and lady Mary have no secrets one for another—they are alike in temper and principles——women of their disposition are strangers to the noble passion of friendship——Miss B—— will betray lady Mary——through her means I will restore thee to thy sight, and judgment again. Adieu.

L E T

LETTER XVIII.

Miss B—— to Lady MARY H—Y.

I Felicitate thee upon thy victory, and advise thee to make the best of it. Imitate not those presumptuous conquerors, who give time to the enemy they have vanquished, to recover.—Trust not to the superiority of thy genius—fortune may change—give the blow whilst it is in thy power to command—secure thy conquest, and be happy. The general has not made the resistance I expected from a man of his age and understanding—I am amazed at his pusillanimity—he had such an advantage against thee; and yet he has yielded, and made himself thy slave!—After his shameful surrender, he deserves not thy pity; chain him with the
fet-

fetters of matrimony——make him thine, that thou mayest be thyself with impunity : the art of keeping him perpetually blind and credulous, is to speak more to his senses than to his heart——Captivate the former ; through them only the latter will feel. When a wife ceases to please her husband, it is her fault——Would she act the part of an artful mistress, he would continue a lover.——Of the talent of granting and denying *à propos* thou should'st learn the theory before thou venturest on the practical part. When a man has but to wish for a good to obtain it, the desire of enjoyment freezes in his heart——What then becomes of that good ? an object of dislike : this is the natural transition from transports to indifference. Dislike restores a husband to his reason——under the guide of that impertinent, faithful counsellor, he will grow clear-sighted, peevish, and troublesome——By all means, beggar the general of his reason——let him see, feel, think but through thy own organs——Should'st thou hate him, conceal thy hatred under the mask of love——if he
ever

ever happens to think for himself, and discovers he has been thy dupe, the memory of a dissimulation that made him happy, will call for his gratitude, and influence him to forget and forgive. A husband is like a lion, tame to the hand that feeds him, terrible to him who excites his indignation or fury——No more of that animal, whom I am certain thou shalt know how to nurse and conduct.——Now, Maria, for my pranks——Why should I hesitate to reveal them to thee? Like conspirators, we have sworn to be faithful one to another——To fear to open thee my heart would betray a diffidence I have not——Self-interest is the tie of the knaves——thou and I are bound by friendship.

I wondered last summer that the Italians, who performed at the opera, should find so familiar an admittance at the toilet of women of my age and fashion. Lady R——y, to whom I trusted my surprize, smiled, and asked if she could rely upon my discretion. Having answered in the affirmative, she initiated me into a mystery I had not the least idea of.

“ It is not, said Lady R——y, the want
 “ of improving in music that opens the apart-
 “ ments of an unmarried woman to those *fig-*
 “ *nori*.—Nature and curiosity are the sole springs
 “ of the easy and favourable reception she gives
 “ them.—Those *signori*, Amelia, are of neither
 “ sex—they, however, belong so far to that of
 “ man, as to be able to amuse our senses with
 “ the lively shadow of pleasure : as no danger
 “ attends our raptures with them—You must
 “ understand me, Amelia.”

When I was by myself, I reflected——re-
 flected——and ceased to wonder——Sometimes
 after, with the leave of my mother, I sent for
 Signor S——i, who, I had been told, was as
 handsome a man, as he was an excellent mu-
 sician. He came——taught me to sing——
 and to wish for a closer intimacy with him.——
 By degrees he grew so familiar as to oblige
 me to chastise him—with my fan.——By de-
 grees I grew so careless, from my opinion of
 his insignificancy, that I let him often praise, in
 the most expressive manner, every beauty he
 admired : from one degree to another, we
 would

would have come to a perfect intelligence, had not my mother's health hastened our journey to Bath.——Signor S—— arrived here six days ago——guess the rest.

Adieu.

LET

LETTER XIX.

Miss S——, to Miss A——.

HOW lovely virtue is! I wonder it does not animate the heart of every man, and excite them to generous actions. Such a delight attends the performance of our duties, and the doing good, that it must destroy in the individual, who enjoys it, all seeds of vice and corruption. All, dear Charlotte, are sensible of this truth--yet, how few act agreeably to it! Not unlike the clergyman, a saint in the pulpit, and a coxcomb in society, we behave in opposition to our thoughts and feelings. Whence this contradiction? Are virtues merely speculative? I do not believe it. This practice requires the sacrifice of our passions—in the necessity of that
sacrifice

sacrifice I find the reason of our perpetual neglect of virtue. Through the fear of not being promoted to a richer see, the ambitious bishop connives at the profligacy of the great—a judge interprets the law at the will of a munificent lord of the treasury—the needy courtier betrays his friends and country for a place or a pension—and the charms he finds in the sight of his gold steels the heart of a miser against the voice of humanity. I have not spoke of women, Charlotte ; their passions are as craving and destructive to morality.

Acts of beneficence are so scarce in this frivolous and selfish age, that it would seem there are no objects worthy our pity, were not our ears constantly struck with the distresses of our fellow creatures. When assistance is accidentally given by most of our men of fortune to the unhappy, it passes to them through the hand of ostentation—Is this charity?—how different the behaviour of the noble and benevolent Sir George Savile! that gentleman, Charlotte, is one of those few, who

Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

VOL. II.

H

I will

I will not refuse myself the pleasure of telling thee an anecdote relating to that generous baronet. I am certain thou shalt read it with a satisfaction equal to that I have in writing it.

A worthy farmer having met with considerable losses, for none of which he was himself censurable, became so great an object of compassion, that several gentlemen in his neighbourhood, with a laudable alacrity, assisted him with their purses. Sir George Saville was naturally applied to, as a man whose liberality on every striking occasion was unquestionable. To the extreme surprize of the gentlemen who mentioned the situation of the poor farmer's affairs, in a manner sufficient to touch his pitying heart, he refused to advance a shilling towards his relief, declaring at the same time, that he had particular reasons for his behaviour. The soliciting gentlemen were too polite to press Sir George to acquaint them with his reasons; they therefore retired, without repeating their request.

The farmer hearing one of those gentlemen, not long afterwards, speak very slightly of

Sir

Sir George, for not having contributed to his subsistence, suffered him to run on in the condemning strain for some time, without interrupting him, though he looked much agitated, and as if he wished to contradict him. At last, however, not being able to remain silent, he replied with tears in his eyes, " Oh, Sir, you are very much mistaken ; I can't bear to hear so good a man as Sir George Saville so unjustly found fault with. I have received more money from him, since my misfortunes, than from all my benefactors put together. He charged me, indeed, not to mention the sum he gave me, and therefore I do not tell you what it was ; but I assure you, it is sufficient alone to make me and my family happy for ever."

Art thou not, Charlotte, in love with Sir George ? Dost thou not wish for a husband a man who like him prefers to public praises the approbation of his own heart ?

If my propitious star sends in my way a man of so distinguished and magnanimous a character, may he love me !—such examples cannot
be

be too much commended—they should be printed in gold letters, and exposed to public view.

Lulled by luxury in the arms of insensibility, the greatest part of the nobility are deaf to the cries of the miserable——At the sight of a wretch, whose looks and garment speak the lamentable situation, they in humanly turn their eyes from him, and shut their hearts to compassion, though nature attempts to force it into their breast——their riches are squandered——let me not tell thee how, dear Charlotte—such men are not only the disgrace but the ruin of a nation—The people, servile imitators of the great, believe that vice sanctified which they indulge like them they will enjoy guilty, or expensive pleasures—like them scoff at religion, and enoble every folly—the consequences are dreadful——How many families from opulence have sunk into want!——hardly one day passes without hearing of a bankruptcy—of a suicide——Charlotte! the subject is too sad——the pen drops.



I have just received a letter from thee—
 I am sorry I cannot doubt the immorality of
 Lady Mary—her duplicity I knew not—Good
 God ! Is it possible that a young woman should
 thus be lost to the sense of shame !—she loves
 Lord C——, and yet is to be married to
 General St—— !—Not one word about her
 passion for the former has she ever dropped to
 me—I was not a proper confidant, Charlotte—
 unhappy she who can be trusted with such a
 secret !—Must an honest man fall a victim to
 Lady Mary !—We know her guilt—By se-
 creting it from the General, are we not equally
 criminal with her ?—Would not that man be
 highly culpable, who, having it in his power
 to rescue another from an enemy who drags
 him to a precipice, would coldly behold his de-
 struction ?—Is not the case of that man ours ?
 the General is neither a friend nor a relation to
 us !—are we to be virtuous only for those we
 esteem or regard ?—has no other man a claim
 to our generosity ?—— Lady Mary would suf-
 fer by the unravelling of her villainy !—a woman
 wantonly vicious I neither can nor will pity—
 she

she may repent still !——I will write to her——the fear of being betrayed will perhaps induce her to reform——But, dear Charlotte, why is not Lord C—— rather than the General the object of her choice ? Why does she intend to marry the man she hates, and not the man she loves ? I don't understand that——With his lordship she might lead a life of happiness and innocence——with the General she must be miserable and guilty——Oh ! Charlotte, Charlotte, I have no hopes of Lady Mary's conversion——Her resolution bespeaks a heart totally corrupted ——the voice of truth or friendship will not prevent her infamy, since religion and virtue have lost their authority over her——Unfortunare Maria !——how fallen thou art !——I will write, however—it shall not be said I have forsaken her when she stood in need of my help and support.

My reflections on Lady Mary have made me forget thee, dear Charlotte——I will read again the last part of thy letter——Thou had'st a secret motive for not telling the General the infidelity of his mistress——thou blushest
at

at the thought of it !——Charlotte is in love—
in love with General Sc——!——Dear Char-
lotte, tell me I am mistaken, or thy friend
shall be unhappy.

LET-

L E T T E R X X .

General Sc— to EDWARD D—, Esq;

WHAT have I done to thee, Ned, to torment me as thou dost? Wert thou my enemy, thou could'st not more sensibly make me feel thy hatred. Thou would'st not disturb the sleep of a miserable, who as soon as he awakes would curse his existence——Why art thou less generous to me? I detest truth as much as that man abhors light which gives him back to the excruciating sense of his pains——delighted with my error I will not lose it—Woe to him who will take it from me! Thy wisdom I envy not—my folly I would not change with it—talk no more the language of reason—I am deaf—I cannot hear thee.

L E T-

L E T T E R X X I.

Lord C——, to the Earl of W——.

MY LORD,

THE generality of the women of the present age could not fit to the picture you have drawn of them——those, who might say, “ Lord W—— has portrayed us such as we “ are,” I know no more than a general does the brave, or the cowards in his army till he has led them to action. Had not Newton evinced by his writings that he was a great genius, never would he have been distinguished by that glorious title——in the same manner I will not affirm that a woman is really virtuous, unless she has incontestably proved herself so. For a deserved reputation, thousands are usurped— If a man, or a woman, becomes the colours
they

they wear, the vulgar are easily deceived; they will not question their apparent identity, and pull off the mask that conceals the impostor. I am not so generous, my lord; out of courtesy, I will not bely my reason, and act like a fool. I have met with so many quacks upon the stage of polite life, that I think myself perpetually surrounded by hypocrites, or knaves—in vain do I look for nature, every where I find art in its place.—I hear of honesty—"Who speaks the word"?—Lord W—— going to Arthur's. A woman made yesterday the panegyric of modesty—"Her name?"—Mrs. S——, who sues her husband in Doctors-Commons for insufficiency.—I could fill a whole volume in folio, my lord, with the names of men and women who talk and act in as inconsistent a manner.

You fear that libertinism is the sole cause of my dislike to marriage—you do not do me justice, my lord—Were I certain to be as happy as the dukes of Portland and Buccleugh, the lords Ancram and Molineux, &c. to-morrow, nay this very minute, I would turn a husband.

Give

Give me such a wife as every one of them can boast, and you shall have my hearty thanks.

Since you don't bid me to give you an account of my conduct, though you eagerly long to be acquainted with it, I will gratify your curiosity. I have, my lord, a favourite folly, which I indulge to the utmost of my power—the ruin of all the young women who please me, I attempt—thunder not, my lord, a volley of oaths against me—stop the word villain I see ready to fly from your lips—wait for condemning me till you are fully convinced I deserve it.

Amazed at the number of adulteresses of every rank, I thought their depravity sprung from education—that had they been sincerely devoted to virtue before their marriage, they would have continued so after it. A discreet wife, my lord, launches not so easily into the paths of vice—there is between her and infamy a distance almost impossible to be gone through—many are the false steps she must be guilty of, before she fills the measure of her iniquity—from innocence to crime the interval is immense—is dreadful to think of—Unless
her

her heart be corrupted in the prime of her life; a woman cannot deviate from her duty—the habit of performing it gives her necessarily a power over her passions—at the idea of vice, she must as naturally shudder with horror as at the unexpected sight of a monster—These reflexions, my lord, made me resolve to frequent the company of the young ladies of fashion—to study their character—to watch attentively their tastes, pleasures and inclinations—What was the result of my observations, my lord?—I am ashamed to tell it—a confirmation of my suspicions.—From their idleness, vanity, love for dissipation, indifference of their religious duties—let me add, from their indecency, I concluded that the odds against a husband's honour were one hundred to one.—“Did you put their virtue to the test?”—I did, my lord—most of them would have been mine had I not had more discretion than they.—

I am just engaged with one of those beauties—I have had the impertinence to declare solemnly I never would marry—yet
 she

she receives me!——More than that, my lord—she feigns an inclination for one of the honestest men in the kingdom, who is extremely fond of her——to him she has promised her hand—to me given her heart——when she has pronounced the sacred Yes, I am to be happy—Does not your soul glow with indignation?—Can I think of a wife, when such examples are under my eye?—

I am, with respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and obedient servant,

C——

LETTER XXII.

Miss S——, to Lady MARY H—Y.

HOWever incredible what I have heard of you, my lady, I must believe it. When Miss A—— affirms any thing, there is no doubting her veracity—never would my honest Charlotte tell a lie even in a jest. Your passion for Lord C—— is not a mystery to me—add not to your guilt by denying the charge—a letter you wrote to his lordship fell into the hands of miss A——; she read it—What good can you expect from a behaviour so opposite to virtue? Flatter not yourself to avoid the contempt due to your duplicity—the baseness of your character will not long remain a secret to a man interested to study you—be his confidence
in

in you ever so great, a nothing may undecieve him—in what light then shall you appear to him, to the whole world?—from your choice of the general for a husband, I conjecture that Lord C—— despises you—how else would he not wed the woman he loves?—You must be blind, indeed, if you do not see his contempt in the refusal of his hand—You suffer the visits of a man who disdains to take you for his wife!—nay, you love that man!—What miserable opinion must he not have of you?—Had he any delicacy, I would be surpris'd should he not scorn you even for his mistress. Are you so totally dead to modesty, as not to feel the heinousness of your conduct?—Will you, fully resolv'd to betray the General, swear to be faithful to him?—God forbid there should be one woman capable of committing such a crime!—better would it be for her never to have been born——Mary, Mary! I will not tell you, I fear you are that woman, who will wantonly give us that unparalell'd instance of human depravity——Reflect on the charms of a virtuous life, on the detestation in

in which the vicious are justly held——If
lady Mary thinks, she will forsake her errors—
that I may pride in her friendship is the sincere
wish of

JENNY S——?

LET,

LETTER XXIII.

Lady MARY H—y, to Miss B—.

FEAR not, Amelia; I'll manage well that domestic animal we call a husband—those things are the most governable creatures upon earth—to me he shall be as meek as a lamb. Since he swallowed the pill I gave him, the general has had no new fits of his disease—like a philter it has increased his love and confidence—He talks of expiating for his injustice, and his hand is the offering he presents to my forgiving temper.—I have humanely accepted the oblation, but not yet fixed the day of the sacrifice.—He would have named it—I blushed—he was silent. That blush came undoubtedly very *bien de propos*—I could not help it—as it is

universally agreed that a crimson hue must spread over our cheeks whenever the wedding-day is talked of—had it not enlivened my features, my modesty might have been called in question. Men have more faith in those sudden, equivocal colourings, than in the behaviour of their mistresses—they take them for the genuine sallies of a virtuous soul!—Every day deceived, they will be deceived again.

Lord C—— grows incessantly more tender and pressing—I know not what to do with him—more than once I think he might—But when I am forgetful of myself, he is the more careful of me——Not always, Amelia, have I, inwardly, thanked him for his discretion—I have sometimes thought it offensive—Nature and pride murmured against him—I am unjust—his respect deserves my praises. Why are we tempted not to forgive the respect of a lover, though conscious it is as painful to him as it is advantageous to us? Does not our folly proceed from the idea that the man, who can deprive himself of a pleasure, wishes but faintly

for

for it?—I sincerely believe that pride is a greater enemy to our sex than both love and nature—
Two days ago I was betrayed by it into an act, which neither of the latter would have made me commit.—Lord C——, after having gazed with the eye of admiration upon me, said it was a pity my legs should not answer the beauty of my face.—

“How do you know they do not, my lord?—

“I have been told by a lady that you had not
“to boast that part of your person—

“And you believe her?

“She had no interest to deceive me—

Then, Amelia, to evince to him the impertinence of her judgment, I shewed him my leg up to the knee.

“Well, my lord, what is your opinion now?—

I need not tell thee, Amelia, the praises he spoke, and the fatal consequences which were nigh attending my indiscretion. The stratagem used by his lordship was not very ingenious; but my pride took so easily alarm, that I had

neither the time, nor the thought to prepare against it.

As from my sensations in my *têtes à têtes* with Lord C——, I am certain that my virtue would not turn superior to his attacks were they made with a resolution to conquer, I will no more expose myself to the hazard of a defeat——What I call his respect, may, for ought I know, be ignorance of my feelings, or of the value of an opportunity.——Should he, on a sudden, become a *connoisseur* in either, and make use of his knowledge before my reputation is sheltered under the wings of Hymen, I might repent——I will not repent, Amelia——When the priest has conjured fear out of my mind, then——then——then——



Thy taste for the *Signori Castrati*, so universal a few years ago, is almost grown out of fashion——The wonderful adventure of Signora *Tenduci* spread such a terror among the *curiosi* of our sex, that the boldest of them durst hardly repeat the experiment. Thou wast in the country when it was reported that the Signora was likely to become a mother——The news of

an invasion from the French would not have frightened women half so much—it threw the whole tribe of *Amanti* into fear and confusion—every *Signor* was thought a *Tenduci*—To become a mother without the leave of a priest!—This dismal reflexion, Amelia, I read in the countenance of several of my friends for three months—that time elapsed, calm and confidence entered their hearts again. I confess to thee, that I was resolved to be initiated into the mystery—This *Signora* struck a damp on my spirits—though it was afterwards known that the *Signor Marito* had not operated the miracle, my apprehensions did not subside——To tell you the truth, my inclination did not speak forcibly in favour of the *Signori*; had my heart felt for them, I would have believed in the impossibility of a detection, and gratified my fancy. Indulge thy whim, Amelia; but beware of thy servants; confide in none of them: should thy waiting woman be trusted with thy secret, either she would grow impertinent and imperious, or betray thee at the least displeasure. A woman must be very stupid, who wants a
confidant

confidant to help her to carry on an intrigue with success——be the circumstances ever so much against her, she will infallibly turn them to her advantage with patience and dissimulation. The scarcity of the *rendezvous* makes them the more exquisitely agreeable—it keeps the soul perpetually on the wing of desire——Stolen enjoyments cannot create dislike or satiety ; these, according to experience, are the effects only of a calm, undisturbed possession. Were women of gallantry convinced of this truth, rather than to make a confidant, they would wish for spies on their conduct——A dish he can command blunts the appetite of a voluptuary —— We all are that voluptuary, Amelia——I'll say no more.

LET-

L E T T E R XXIV.

Miss A——, to Miss S——.

IT is too true, dear Jenny, that I love general Sc——. My passion for being unlucky is not criminal—I am not ashamed to own it. Since I am come to my parents I have had hundreds of opportunities of knowing the merit of the general; he is in every respect worthy of me. Before he saw lady Mary I thought myself the object of the daily visits he paid to us—I mistook his behaviour, his looks, his language, for the expressions of a tender sentiment—my mother believed as I did—The general's inclination for lady Mary told us our error—I awoke from a pleasing dream, and sighed at the loss of it——Should I describe

to thee the character of the general, thou wouldst not wonder at my affection for him—the description would raise too sensibly emotions I wish for ever silent in my heart—I must neither speak, nor think, nor write of him—Oh! dear Jenny, it is a torment to love, and to have an happy rival—I do not hate lady Mary upon that account—Heaven forbid I should be guilty of such a meanness.—Would she deserved the lover fortune has given her!—Absence and religion, Jenny, are my physicians; to them I trust my cure—help them with thy counsels. Adieu.

LET,

L E T T E R XXV.

Lady MARY H—Y, to Miss S—:

THOU hast known me these ten years past, and yet thou dost so egregiously mistake my character!—What action of mine, Jenny, has made thee so easily believe me guilty of the indecent behaviour thou chargest me with?—Hast thou ever discovered in me a foible I ought to blush for? My heart I have always laid open before thee—which of its feelings authorizes the injustice thou hast done me?—Though not, in appearance, as virtuous as thou art, I am so in reality—the difference of the life we live commands a difference in our manners—At L—— I would be Jenny—in London thou wouldst be Lady Mary. From my coquetry
sen-

sensible people will imply I am vicious, no more than thou art honest from the modesty of thy carriage. Our deportment, Jenny, is not the characteristic of our morals——Disimulation and ingenuity are often united together——Perhaps thou hast as many censurs as I have——thou art welcome to believe the contrary : however true, I am not tenacious of my opinions : I suffer every body to think, or act as they please; and never infer from their unlikeness to me that I am the better, and they the worse.

I respect Miss A——, and value her veracity as much as thou dost ; but is she infallible ? Though I have a great idea of her discernment, permit me, Jenny, to doubt her being always right in the judgments she forms. No mortal was ever endowed with an unerring sagacity ; the wisest have sometimes pronounced sentences which have been reversed at the tribunal of cool impartiality. I do not accuse Miss A—— with an intention of injuring me ; to the extreme delicacy of her virtue I attribute only her credulity. The gaiety of my conduct with Lord C—— she interpreted for inclination ; we are
not

not prudes in London, dear Jenny ; the furlly looks of a woman, who sees crime in the most insignificant action, attitude, or speech of her admirers, are unknown upon the brilliant stage of life.—We act the more freely, that we are the more innocent. The probability of an intelligence between his lordship and me deceived Miss A——— : she had no sooner cherished the fancy of its being real, than it was out of my power to convince her of its non-existence. The inconsistency of her behaviour was adequate to her obstinacy. If she thought me lost to honour, why did she continue to visit a woman she ought to have forsaken ? I own, Jenny, that I did no longer look upon her as a friend—that I even impeached her delicacy—that I was tempted to believe her rather, what the French call, *une begeule* than a sincere votary of virtue. No consideration whatever would have prevented me from breaking with a woman I should have despised—thou wouldst have behaved in the same manner, Jenny—still suspicious, and yet treating me with the usual familiarity ! I resolved to try her, determined, if the experiment proved

proved unsuccessful, to renounce her society. I invited her one day to breakfast with me the next morning. Before she came I wrote a letter, which I directed to Lord C——, and laid unsealed upon my toilet. After we had drank our first dish of tea, upon a signal I gave, my waiting woman desired me in the name of my father to go down. I obeyed the command, and stayed almost half an hour in another apartment. When I came back, I threw a glance at the letter, and knew it had been read by its not being in the same place I had laid it in. Instead of the reproofs I expected from the virtuous Miss A——, I saw her calm and friendly—I had no patience any longer; I pretended the necessity of a visit I could not delay, and got rid of her. Whether Miss A—— discovered the true motive of that visit I know not; but from that moment we never visited one another. Hadst thou been in my place, Jenny, couldst thou have forbore acting as I did? No: I dare say that thy indignation would have been marked still more strongly. Since my letter to Lord C—— was the real cause of Miss A——'s rupture

rupture with me, she has my esteem again, tho' I cannot commend her silence upon such an occasion. Thy severity is far more honourable and worthy of us both—I thank thee for this new proof of thy virtue and friendship.

LET.

LETTER XXVI.

Miss B—— to Lady MARY H—V.

YESTERDAY on my entering the ball-room the first object I beheld was Edward D——, Esq. At the sight of me he affected the greatest surprize.

“ What ! the charming Miss B—— in this place ?

The man, Maria, failed in the expression of his surprize—he spoke the words with an accent that plainly declared he knew I was here. His dissimulation put me upon my guard. He begged to know whether my hand was engaged for

for the evening. Answering it was not, he desired the favour to dance with me. The first country dance over, we sat down.

“ How does General Sc—, Sir ?

“ I have not heard from him these three weeks past—he is so much in love with the beautiful and sensible Lady Mary H— that he has no time to give to friendship.”—

It was a lie ; I read it in his looks.

“ I expect every day the news of their being married—

“ I’ll rejoice at the happy event——matrimony is a blessed state when love and esteem form its sacred tie.

“ Lady Mary deserves the General——

“ The General deserves Lady Mary——

Then he carelessly turned the conversation upon the diversions of Bath. Of all the women in the room none pleased Mr. D—— but the sprightly and coquettes. I bantered him on the novelty of his taste——What dost thou think

was

was his answer ? Shouldst thou rack thy wits for ten years thou could'st not guess it.

“ Reserved and sedate women, madam, are so
 “ generally stupid, that their virtue, were it
 “ unquestionable, is not a compensation for
 “ the *ennui* they cause. Having an equal chance
 “ to find true honour in a gay as in a modest
 “ woman, I give the preference to the former,
 “ whose company is undoubtedly more lively
 “ and agreeable.

“ And you think the odds equal ?—

“ Should they be against the coquette, I rather
 “ would be a cuckold than tired.——

“ Pray, Sir, what beauty has made such a
 “ metamorphosis in you ?

“ To my reason, and not a beauty, I am in-
 “ debted for it——the example of so prudent
 “ a man as General Sc—— has persuaded me I
 “ was a fool——

“ I am certain that the General will always
 “ felicitate himself upon his choice of Lady
 “ Mary——

“ My

“ My consciousness of it began my conversion.—

That man cannot deceive with a good grace—
I felt an irony in the panegyric.

“ Thou shan’t shuffle with me, said I to myself; I must and will read in thy heart.—

“ Had you named another woman than lady Mary, I would believe in your conversion—

His eyes betrayed him instantly.

“ It is not, Sir, with a man of your honour I will dissemble—the levity of lady Mary should rather confirm your principles than alter them—

“ You are better acquainted with her character than I am—more out of compliment to you than of my sense of her merit I have praised her—

“ I do not thank you for your civility—I love to hear truth, and answer it.—

“ Your friendship for lady Mary bid me be false—

“ Though her friend, I am not blind to her
“ faults.—I never will defend what I cannot
“ applaud.—

The tone of ingenuity, Maria, is always
persuasive—it made Mr. Sc—— indiscreet.

“ My esteem for the general has made me
“ study lady Mary—I fear he shall be un-
“ happy—

“ Why don’t you dissuade him from a match
“ you do not approve?—

“ He will not be convinced—

“ Very likely you have no heavy charge to
“ lay against her—have you?—

“ I have one—but——

“ You cannot prove it——

“ Not sufficiently enough to make it effective.--

“ I pity general Sc—— —

“ You may save him from destruction—

I made no reply.

“ We grow too grave, Sir ; let us dance.—

“ Will you give me leave to wait upon you
“ to-morrow?—

I smiled

I smiled a Yes. From that moment Mr. D—— perfonated the lover, and was careful of pleafing me. He admired—admired—admired every thing I did—every thing I fpoke—I was all beauty, an angel, and I know not what—I laughed in my heart at the prefumption of that fellow, who hoped to impofe upon me. A novice in the art of deceit entering the lifts with a woman of my experience!



Mr. D—— came to-day at noon, and was received by me with the very countenance of lady Mary. The ufual compliments paid—

“ If you think me worthy of your confidence,
“ Sir, tell me honeftly the nature of your
“ accufation againft lady Mary H——y.—

“ It is no fecret to you, dear madam—

And the fawning difsembler ftole my hand to his lips.

" Lady Mary's secrets are as innocent, as her heart is chaste—

" Then, madam, you are but half her confidant—

" You are mistaken, Sir; I know every thought and every affection of lady Mary—

" And yet you think her innocent?—

" I sincerely do.—

" You was so severe last night upon her—

" I said she had faults—What woman has none?—

" Did not you pity general Sc——?—

" I still do pity him if lady Mary is unworthy of him—

" I esteem you the more, madam, that lady Mary has not durst to trust her guilt to you—

" Her guilt!—you frighten me——Can you make good your assertion?—You cannot—I dare you to it—Lady Mary is above slander—

" Like you, madam, I would take the part of a friend, were I certain of his innocence—

" I cannot

"I cannot be deceived, Sir, in my knowledge
 "of lady Mary's character; had she a foible,
 "which might bring disgrace upon the general,
 "I would scorn her friendship—not hesitate one
 "minute to sacrifice her to him——Have you
 "found her defective in her duties—false in her
 "attachment to the general?—Prove it to me,
 "and this instant I break with her——If you
 "have any respect for me, suffer me not to be
 "called the friend of a vicious woman——spare
 "me the shame of a farther connexion with
 "her——A young woman can never be too
 "tender of her reputation——it behoves you
 "as a man of honour to free me from blame——
 "Be the foible of lady Mary what it will,
 "name it; you may depend upon my gratitude
 "and secrecy——

Truth was in the tone of my voice and every
 feature. Mr. D—— paused, then looked
 upon me with an air of sentiment and satisfac-
 tion.

"I am happy, dear madam, to find you the
 "reverse of what I thought you to be—Forgive
 "my freedom—I will ingenuously tell you, that
 "from

“ from your intimacy with lady Mary I con-
 “ jectured you was like her, trifling, vain and
 “ false—

“ Believe me, Sir, you don't paint lady Mary
 “ faithfully——

“ Your generosity will not avail her—my
 “ picture of her is true——Know, dear ma-
 “ dam, that lady Mary, though her hand be
 “ promised to general Sc——, has a secret
 “ amour with Lord C——.

“ God be blessed! you have, sir, revived
 “ my sinking soul——is this the mighty charge
 “ you have against lady Mary?

“ Can she be more criminal?—

I burst into laughter. At this unexpected
 sally, the face of the Esquire, which is none of
 the shortest, extended to a frightful length, and
 his tongue stammered monosyllables of wonder
 I could not hear.

“ I am amazed, sir, how a man of your pe-
 “ netration and understanding could thus realize
 “ a chimera—

“ A chimera, madam!—

“ What

" What else is a mere probability to the eye
 " of reason?—if this is your manner of judging
 " of mankind, you must certainly have no faith
 " in chastity, honour and virtue. No longer
 " am I angry with you for having thought me
 " vain and false—such conclusion was natural
 " in a man of your mysanthropic disposition.
 " General Sc—— loves lady Mary, and she
 " coquettes with Lord C——! that beha-
 " viour, Sir, is the characteristic of every sen-
 " sible woman desirous of being adored by her
 " lover—the fear of a rival enlivens her charms,
 " and keeps the general's passion alive, when a
 " positive certainty of pleasing her would per-
 " haps lull him into a lethargic fit of indiffe-
 " rence. Of all men lady Mary despises
 " Lord C—— the most—In return, Sir,
 " for the service you intended to do me, I will
 " condescend to give you an undeniable proof
 " of my assertion.—Stay—I shall be back in a
 " few minutes—

And I stepped to my closet. I remembered
 a letter thou didst write to me a few months
 ago, when curious to know whether a fond wo-
 man

man could abuse her lover, I desired thee to speak of Lord C—— as if he were the object of thy hatred. That letter expressed so feelingly thy dislike of him, that conscious it would convince the Esquire, I gave it to him to read. I sat down, and perused him from head to foot with a mixed air of indignation and pity.

D—— was in a maze—ten times he meditated on each line, studied the hand, and looked at the date.

“Am I awaked, or in a dream?—

“More likely in a dream, Sir, for, these
 “twenty minutes past, you have been abso-
 “lutely insensible of my presence.—What, in
 “the name of reason, can you wonder at so
 “long?—Does the shame of repenting struggle
 “in your breast with the desire of doing justice
 “to lady Mary?—

“No man, dear madam, was ever so willing
 “to give satisfaction for the injuries he has
 “done——But, before, I must be utterly
 “certain I was wrong.—Though this letter
 “speaks in a forcible manner the innocence of
 “lady

“ lady Mary, I have doubts still—I am apt to
 “ think they are ill founded—nay, I wish they
 “ may be so—

I arose with dignity and confidence.

“ When your reason, Sir, has bid your pre-
 “ judices away, I shall be glad to see you—till
 “ then honour permits me not to receive the
 “ calumniator of my virtuous friend.—I have
 “ promised you secrecy; I’ll keep my word—
 “ Lady Mary shall not know she had an enemy
 “ in you—in you, Sir, whom she sincerely
 “ esteemed and respected!—I will spare her
 “ feelings the knowledge of your hatred—

I know not, Maria, what charm nature on a
 sudden decked me with—Whether that charm
 was the action with which I accompanied my
 speech, or the speech itself, but the eyes and
 countenance of D—— told me plainly I pleased
 him—

“ You have spoke, dear madam, as I like to
 “ hear—your lips grace your very indigna-
 “ tion—No longer am I an unbeliever in the
 | “ virtues of lady Mary—Will you forgive my
 “ suspicions against her?—

And

And he amorously took my hand in his.

“Are you sensible they were frivolous and unjust?—

“I am—

“Had you wantonly persisted in your error, I would have mistrusted your probity—you have added to the good opinion I had of you—

“I am happy in that good opinion—

I affected a blush, and disengaged my hand. The confusion of Mr. D—— increased—he would speak, and durst not—My trouble, I artfully tuned to the note of his own, and with the steps of a virgin walked to the chimney—he drew near me, opened his lips—the “I love you” was half pronounced when some company coming in spared my modesty the fatigue of an answer, and left me at liberty to feign I had not understood him.

Don’t you admire the power of circumstances, Maria? I am not certainly more amiable now than I was a few weeks ago—yet, here I am loved by D——, whilst in London I was the object of his dislike——Thank thy star for his affection

affection to me——The fellow deserves to be severely punished for his contempt of us both—— Since fate has complimented me with the power of revenge, be sure I will exert it with gratitude and spirit. Adieu.

DET.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Miss S—, to Miss A—.

I SEND thee, dear Charlotte, a letter from lady Mary—it is written with so little art, and so much ingenuity, that I am inclined to think thou wast too precipitate in thy judgment of her—I rather would impeach thy discernment than her virtue—the best may err—Thou mayest without disgrace to thyself acknowledge thy error, and do justice to lady Mary—Charity bids us to bely appearances—to our eyes they ought not to be conclusive. Who among mankind would be spared by slander, were his external form to be taken for the real picture of his sentiments? I fear that the stroke of satire would be levelled at the most innocent.

innocent. Men or women, whose honour, or modesty is suspected by the public, I would avoid, not from a conviction of their guilt, but out of regard for myself, for general prejudices bind the wisest and most independent to a conduct they would disdain, had they the liberty of acting agreeably to the dictates of reason—But a few censurs, Charlotte, must not compel us to despise those we always had a reason to esteem.—Read the defence of lady Mary—I wish it could convince thee—I am loath to condemn her—she interpreted thy behaviour in a manner ~~not~~ very honourable to thee—her motives were as well founded as those which induced thee to pronounce against her——Yet, at the first mention I have made to her of the real cause of your rupture, she offers thee her friendship again——Wilt thou be less generous than lady Mary?——Why shouldst thou doubt her veracity?——I will read her letter once more——My dear Charlotte, I believe her innocent.——I will not write the name of a man thou shouldst forget——my reflections would but entertain a flame, absence and religion will insensibly extinguish.

L E T.

LETTER XXVIII.

Lady MARY H—Y, to Miss B—:

NATURE, dear Amelia, must certainly be partial in her works, else she would make a more equal distribution of wit, beauty, talents and merit — From the superior accomplishments she has endowed the knaves with, it should seem she has, for their sport or advantage only, created the honest and virtuous. For once we see candour and virtue come off conqueror over vice and hypocrisy, a thousand times we behold them in the train of their slaves, and gracing their triumph. As, from their numbers, we cannot think that the vicious owe their prosperity to chance, I'll conclude they were predestinated to be the supreme rulers

rulers upon earth—and that what we call good and bad are merely words like white and black, to express the difference of two things the reverse of each other. The language of men, Amelia, and that of reason, agree seldom together: though their expression be sometimes the same, their meaning is oftener as unlike as loveliness and deformity, order and confusion. Men preach self-denials—Reason advises us to enjoy——Reason, supported by experience, cannot err——the latter tells openly, that those are the happiest, who are the most free of religious prejudices, and that no man scruples to deceive when he cannot persuade—to betray when the treason is beneficial to him——These tenets, Amelia, have formed the creed of all the sensible people in every age, and each of them has acted according to their spirit, whenever self-interest gave the word of command. Why these prerogatives should not extend to women, I do not comprehend——Are we to be made slaves, that men may more freely tyrannize over us, and give a loose to their passions? They will indulge every whim, however destructive

destructive to society, and we shall sacrifice desires, which, at the worst, are only offensive to us! They will range the whole circle of pleasures, and we shall tamely keep within the line they have drawn, and forbid us to pass? That men should expect we will welcome chains they scorn to be fettered with, is truly amazing. Were we, like a piece of mechanism, to be wound up at their caprice, to have no other motion than that they would please to give us, insensible of our powers of resistance, we could not oppose their operations.——But favoured with the same intellectual faculties they possess, must we surrender them at the imperious nod of the despotic lords, and take the form they bid us to assume?——Wise men of Gotham! I will neither believe, nor obey you.—When legislators trample under their feet the laws they have enacted, what becomes of their authority? Who, but fools, will be bound by them? Did not the duke of Graf—, living in open adultery, inspire his duchess with a contempt of virtue? Who can blame her for having followed his example? Is it not extravagant

gant to require that a woman should sacrifice
 affections men have it not in their power to
 conquer? — There are virtues, I am told,
 peculiar to our sex. — I think I hear the
 tyrant *Basilides*, Czar of Muscovy, ordering
 one of his subjects to cross a river half frozen
 over, whilst in furs, and from a warm room,
 he contemplates the delightful spectacle. —
 Virtues peculiar to our sex! — modesty
 they name — I do not find that word in
 the dictionary of Nature — Nature blushes
 not at the sensations she creates — Mo-
 desty is of a modern date — it is the work
 of education, and more a veil for vice than
 a support to virtue — We learn to blush
 as we learn to read — Did not our discreet
 governesses teach us the science of the looks
 and words, which, darted at us, or pronounced
 within the atmosphere of our ears, must paint
 our cheeks with a crimson hue, we would
 appear more innocent, chaste and true — A
 sudden colouring betrays our knowledge of
 what is wrong — ignorance is a quality far

more honourable——Should modesty be
virtue, ought it to be peculiar to our sex?——
I think again of *Basilides*——I have no pa-
tience——Adieu.

LET.

L E T T E R X X I X .

EDWARD D——, *Esq; to General Sc——*;

L O V E——love——thou the happiest of men, love!——To Lady Mary I bend the knee, and ask for pardon. I saw with the eye of prejudice—Like a dilirious man, I mistook the objects before me, and beheld them under the colours my fancy gave them——the illusion is vanished——I have yielded to truth, and forsaken my error.

Miss B—— has undeceived me—to her I am indebted for the return of my reason—from a sceptic she has changed me into a believer—Lady Mary is worthy of thee.

Unless we can imitate nature, and falsehood sincerity, so well, as to speak their language, and act in their manner, I cannot question the virtue of thy mistress. The most experienced courtier fails sometimes in the expression of a lie—often I have discovered hatred in the countenance of the great at the very instant they swore friendship to a man—Can a young, gay woman, excel in hypocrisy the knave, whose fortune or happiness depends solely on his talents of dissembling?—I think it impossible. Miss B—— did not once contradict herself—her voice and her looks never were out of tune—the same ingenuity prevailed in the defence of Lady Mary, and her indignation against me—truth—truth only flowed from her lips—Lady Mary is worthy of thee.

The recovery of my reason, dear Jack, has been attended with the loss of my liberty—Whilst Amelia spoke persuasion to my mind, she displayed such a bewitching variety of charms as set off her wit and beauty with all the grace of novelty and seduction. To me she was a woman I never had seen before—My soul
panted

panted with delight at every word she uttered, and would have fixed in my eyes to tell her the sensations she felt, had not the dignity of her deportment struck me with fear and respect.

A beauty in a circle is not half so lovely as in a *tête à tête*—Our attention not being then diverted by other objects, centers necessarily in her. Emotions we cannot account for, come immediately to invade our breast—By degrees we see more than we think—feel more than we see.—Nature has ordered that two young persons of different sex should never be alone, but the idea of pleasure must intrude and make a third among them——In women that idea is checked by modesty—in us, finding no enemy to oppose its progress, it soon gives the impulse to the heart, and enlivens every sense. Thus charmingly deluded—thus under the sway of desire, if a woman enchants our reason to an equal degree of enthusiasm, we are no longer ourselves—indifference flies away——Of all passions, love alone remains behind to dictate—to be obeyed. Amelia talked as she looked—there was a perfect harmony between her features

tures and her sentiments—between her action and the tone of her voice—between the graceful opening of her lips and the tempting heave of her bosom—I must cease to write, or my imagination will describe as I feel.

I. E. T.

LETTER XXX.

Lord C——, to the Earl of W——.

MY LORD,

“**Y**OU do not approve of the part I perform, and you see danger in its execution.”——I own it is disgraceful, but deny it is dangerous——The degeneracy of the ladies of fashion has emboldened me to act as I do——Were they not more vain than proud, I would hardly venture my life for the pleasure of deceit, or the glory of knowing them. Luxury and the love of dissipation have enfeebled their spirits——Perpetually taken up with trifles, their character is made up of folly——Open to fancies, their heart is shut to generous passions.

Some

Some philosophers pretend that good morals are not necessary in an opulent kingdom—if that maxim be true, our women are just as they ought to be: most of them making a distinction between chastity and virtue, they corrupt before they are corrupted.

Men having wisely agreed that a lady of quality is purged from all past offences by her second marriage after a divorce, I am amazed she does not take a new lover, and deserve a new divorce every month. This moderation, considering the manners of the age, and the willingness of the legislators to connive at their depravation, proves that decency has not yet taken an absolute *coupé* of the female heart—I am glad of it; for, so long as a spark of virtue remains, there are some hopes of her reviving again——Though I tenderly indulge these hopes, my Lord, they will have no influence on my judgment—it is not so bad a foundation that I will trust the happiness of my life.

Modern education, my Lord, is the science of words, and not of things—the science of the

the tastes and not of the virtues. In the most celebrated schools for young ladies, Frivolity dictates gravely the ridicules they must avoid, and the graces they are to adorn themselves with.

The person is the sole object of the attention of their instructors—the reason and the heart are left to the care of nature. Hence so many lovely and contemptible ladies G—————

The world, my Lord, finishes what education began—Pleasure, Fashion, the toilet, form the circle of their affections, thoughts and knowledge—No time can be spared for the study of religion—Cars, music, balls, ridottos, leave not one hour for the practical part of their duties—they wonder libertinism is so much in vogue——I wonder it is still kept within the bounds of shame—that it does not soar openly upon the wings of impudence as it does upon those of impunity. Little souls, my Lord, have no natural defence against passions; they may be attacked on every side—How could the place be tenable against a bold or skilful besieger?

Women, on whose minds the principles of morality have not been so deeply engraved as the
maxims,

maxims, which vanity and folly have established the rules of a fashionable life, exchange soon the respect for the contempt of themselves—Each duty that opposes their inclination becoming troublesome, indifference takes inseparably the place of honour—Thus they rid themselves of a remainder of modesty, which puts them under restraint, and, as shamelessly as a Lady Va——, or a Lady H——on, leap into the vortex of vice and infamy.

We are, my Lord, the creators of the modern woman of fashion—Of the form she wears we have a right to complain no more than the artist of the expression he has given to the statue he has made. When men deify vice, will women continue to be discreet or religious—Unless the laws, as in Japan, punish with death the violators of modesty, self-love, pride, or the thirst of revenge will build temples to pleasure upon the ruins of those of virtue. Perpetually tempting, or tempted, under no other check than the fear of their indiscretion, it would be a miracle if nature was not triumphant over morality

vality in the hearts of the young and the gay.

Hear men talk, my Lord——What qualities do they praise in the fair?—Is it their reservedness, their silence, the purity of their manners, or the exquisiteness of their judgment? Neither is the object of their panegyric. For what purpose then should women grace themselves with accomplishments, which would make them strangers to the society they live in?——Their merit would be a satire against their admirers——their language could hardly be understood, still less be answered by the coxcombs of the day——They must adopt the futility of the latter, or be contented with the esteem of themselves. Few, my Lord, will prefer a retreat to the world——As want, or ambition forces the man of honour to the levee of knaves in power, vanity, or idleness compels a virtuous woman into the circles of folly——From the motives of their behaviour, I'll conclude that both must soon yield

to the seduction of the examples before them,
and lose their innocence.

I am, with respect,

My Lord,

Your most humble,

and devoted servant,

C—.

L E T.

L E T T E R X X X I .

Miss B—— to Lady MARY H—Y.

A Flexible character, dear Maria, is, next to beauty, the greatest favour a woman can receive from nature. When, at pleasure, we give our features the expression of our thoughts, what man is not either our panegyrist or our slave? Beauty, though always moving, does not affect equally every heart——Admiration is sometimes the only effect it causes——Like a brilliant decoration, it often delights the eye without interesting the soul. D——, when I was careless of pleasing him, gazed upon me with indifference——The very first minute I betrayed a desire of his esteem, he breathed but to feel and adore. That desire,
unknown

unknown to him; awoke his self-love——He thought he loved me for myself, whilst in me he loved himself alone——His illusion I artfully fed with a dignity of behaviour the more seductive that from me he did not expect it——Add to that dignity the unspeakable charms of unaffected blushes, smiles, attitudes, and thou shalt not wonder at the sudden power I have obtained over a man of feeling.

Virtuous men have a candour that makes them an easy prey to the hypocrite—Rakes are too restless, suspicious, troublesome—if I ever take a husband it will be in the class of the former. Besides the personal consideration their choices give to their wives, they are a veil between them and the public——With them we can have an amour, and yet parade in all the pride of innocence. So long as a husband appears to love or respect his wife, slander is silent, and she is the mistress of her fate—but a jealous man exposes us to the lashes of satire even before we deserve them—Like a miser perpetually watching over his treasure, he besieges us with unrelenting attention—that attention once re-
marked,

marked, we are without the formality of a trial judged and condemned.

A libertine must make a bad husband. The facility of his enjoyments with contemptible women, influences necessarily his reason against all our sex. Rank, fortune, reputation, are not to him a satisfactory security for our virtue. As, from his successes, Mungo despises all the ministers, and, from his familiarity with the great, Count Eclipse thinks them all dead to honour, the libertine believes all women as immodest and unchaste as those he has lived with. How could either of them entertain a different opinion? Till the man who has frequented but knaves will not mistrust the man of probity, I fear the innocent shall always suffer by the disgrace of the guilty.

There is another kind of men, who, from the deplorable situation of their health, must be a plague to their wives. A constitution broken by excesses in the fields of Cupid and Bacchus, forces naturally diffidence into the heart of a
man.

man. With his strength he has lost his generosity—in the prime of life he has the timidity and suspicions of old age—Woe to the parents, who, without their consent, and in spite of their entreaties and tears, give their daughters to men, who have nothing to recommend them but a little or a large fortune!—The monstrous union nature, reason and virtue forbid—Had the legislators had the cause of morality at heart, by prohibiting marriages between people differing sensibly in age or feelings, they would have done more in her favour than all the laws against adultery. Instead of inventing punishments for that vice, they ought to have destroyed the cause of it. Henrietta Vernon takes a husband—that husband is not a man—prudes may blush at that reflection—I am certain that if women were not compelled to make it, of libertinism they would know the name only.

D——, though loving and virtuous, shall not lead me to the temple of Hymen——A thought comes into my mind——a thought worthy of the god of revenge——He alone
could

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Miss A——, to Miss S——.
[L E T T E R R O O M XXXII.]

Miss A——, to Miss S——.

THOUGH I am as inclined as thou art, dear Jenny, to think well of Lady Mary's morals, I do not see her justification in the letter she has written to thee——Taking advantage of the intelligence thou givest her, she has artfully turned it in her favour——I am accused, that she may appear the more innocent——her charge against me, far from being her apology, is a confirmation of her guilt. A true or false recrimination is not a defence——a woman in her circumstance has but one way of clearing herself——her virtue, were it real, would have pointed it to her——It is only by avoid-

avoiding Lord C. How—~~that this was first met~~
~~to regret, and often her again.~~ not need to yr
 to a young woman, dear Jenny, ought to be
 very tender of her fame—the least blemish
 marks her life with an everlasting disgrace—~~men~~
 men find an excuse for their foibles in the indis-
 creet vivacity inherent to youth—our morality
 is not theirs—we are under the sway of mo-
 desty—they under the law of opinion—this allows
 what the former forbids. Nature and educa-
 tion have prescribed to us duties from which
 we cannot deviate, without vice having first
 entered our hearts, and corrupted our prin-
 ciples. The behaviour of men is no example
 to us, Jenny; the most distant imitation be-
 trays a similarity of tastes and feelings, which
 tells plainly our wish to gratify them—that
 wish announces a soul struggling between vir-
 tue and pleasure, and longing for independence.
 Women of this wanton cast of mind forfeit de-
 servedly their right to respect and consideration.
 As I am persuaded that the debauchees, only,
 can, from the vices of the clergy, imbibe a
 contempt of religion, I believe that none but

female theoretical libertines will violate the dignity of their sex, and form their conduct upon that of men. Passion, Jenny, is the spring of error—sophistry is its reason—may thee and I never be influenced by it.

L E T

LETTER XXXIII.

General Sc— to EDWARD D—, Esq;

I Congratulate thee upon the victory thou hast obtained over thy prejudices—they were, dear Ned, unworthy a man of thy good sense. Thy palinode I welcome with the more pleasure that thy obstinacy, in spite of my confidence in the virtue of Lady Mary, had made me fearful and suspicious. The eye of a friend is so discerning!—that of a lover so dim!—Give my thanks to Miss B— for the change she has operated in thee, and the tranquillity I enjoy.

I have laid thy request at the feet of Lady Mary, and she has granted it in a manner, which has added a new lustre to the beauty of her character. Thy concern for me has indear-

ed

ed thee to her—she has seen no injustice in a partiality of which I was the object.

“ Such a friend, said she to me, is a phoenix—a moral man in times of general depravity, is the most delightful spectacle virtuous women can behold,—I glory in the esteem of Mr. P——. Write to him, that next to your approbation of my conduct, his is the most—May the discreet, sensible Amelia reward him for the justice he has done me !—

Such was her wish, dear Ned—a wish could not satisfy her gratitude—Unsolicted, she promised to exert in thy favour all her interest with Amelia—This is the woman thou didst think mean, false, ungenerous !—O Ned, Ned !—

L E T,

LETTER XXXIV.

Lady Mary H—y, to Miss B—.

AMELIA! when will men grow wise? They are so credulous, that to dupe them is hardly worth our boasting of it. We must have been made up of sentiments—they of passions—How else could I account for their foolishness, and our ingenuity?—they have eyes, and will not see—ears, and will not hear—It seems they have adopted the philosophical tenet introduced by *Foe* among the Chinese, that “perfection consists in making no use of our organs.”—

I am

I am tired, Amelia, of my perpetual conquests over the reason of General Sc—: such easy triumphs cool in me the desire of glory—I believe he will at last reduce me to the necessity of being true, by not tempting me to be false. Such an other rational man fortune has delivered up to thy mercy—The famous French poet *La Fontaine* told a priest “Not to talk of religion, for his bad stile disgusted him of it.”——Can not we say with as much propriety, that “the silly behaviour of virtuous men gives us a dislike to virtue?”——D—— I leave to thy resentment—his recantation does not expiate for the injury—How the General was delighted with it! With what transports he communicated it to me! Should he now see Lord C—— in my arms, I believe he would take him for a phantom, and not for a reality—His friend has written to him, “Love Lady Mary; she is worthy of thee.”—These words have made an enthusiast of my General—no longer is he vexed at the sight of his Lordship—no longer does he find fault with the coquetry of my dress, or the freedom of my manners. When I had pronounced

nounced the pardon of D——, praised him, and offered to prejudice thee in his favour, the General grew fondly delirious, intoxicated. In the height of his rapturous joy, he took me to his bosom, covered me with kisses, and forgot me and himself——For a few minutes I fruitlessly opposed his attempts, so closely was I confined in his arms——so obstinately did he sigh, and love on my lips——Indeed, Amelia, I needed all my strength, and composure of mind to restore him into sobriety again. Had he been Lord C—— I would have been undone. The suddenness of the attack; the fire of his caresses——my indifference, Amelia, was hardly proof against the tumult of my spirits——the fever of desire was nigh invading my heart, when Prudence whispering I might lose a husband, I reflected, and was saved. I know not how it is with other women——but if they have my sensibility without my fears——Virtue, Amelia, is a very frail, slippery thing——men must be either extremely odious, or unskilful, who do not easily run away with it.——

“ When

“When shall I be happy?” has the General asked again and again——

I have gratified his impatience——Thursday next week is fixed——that day I’ll give up my delicacy for the liberty of acting at will——my delicacy!——is it not a fantastical being realized by opinion, and folly?—Were it a virtue, what woman would marry, when her inclination is not consulted in the choice of her husband? Should a daughter tell her parents “My delicacy permits me not to live with a man I do not love”—would they not laugh at her scruple?—Yet they talk of delicacy! From that delicacy springs the impertinent right husbands have usurped to complain of our infidelities. Were I inclined to reason, I would speak the following soliloquy:

“Careless of her character and affection, a man takes a wife to satisfy his passion or avarice—Either, or both being the sole end of the bargain he makes, does he not tacitly leave her at liberty to feel and behave as she pleases?”——Finish the soliloquy, Amelia—I hear Lord C———My heart beats—I cannot think——
I ought

1 Ought not to receive him—I fear—here no

Amelia, Amelia! now must thou acknowledge me thy master in the art of deceit—Hadst thou been in my situation, I doubt if thou shouldst have had the same presence of mind——Read, and then strike to my superiority.

When I left writing, my senses were in a confusion I cannot tell—it was marked in my countenance—expressed in the faltering of my tongue—In vain would I conceal it—A sigh, involuntarily united to the kiss Lord C—— gave, betrayed me—his Lordship—I—Amelia! Modesty and Virtue were silent—I saw but my lover—I felt I know not how—I know not what—Nature favoured his triumph—when the voice of the General deprived him of it.

The sense of my danger calmed instantly my spirits—but on our arising arm and arm from the

the sofa where we sat, our lips met——At that critical juncture the General made his appearance. Fired at the sight of a situation which presaged his disgrace, he coloured, and mechanically carried his hand to his sword.

“ You have won the wager, my Lord, exclaimed I with the accent of indignation.
 “ You know the human heart better than I—
 “ the General is jealous—I am sorry to have
 “ made an experiment, which beggars me of
 “ the most agreeable error I ever indulged.—

“ A wager, madam !

“ Yes, Sir, and I have lost it.—My Lord,
 “ here is a twenty pounds bank note—

“ Indeed, madam, I cannot take it—the odds
 “ were too great in my favour. Certain that a
 “ real lover is no more without jealousy than a
 “ clergyman without ambition, I would have
 “ laid one hundred guineas to five that the Ge-
 “ neral, in spite of his extreme respect for you,
 “ would be alarmed at the liberty I took.—

“ As I was equally certain he would not, you
 “ had no advantage over me——Sir, is it thus
 “ you esteem me ?——

And





And I reclined upon the back of the sofa, with sorrow in every feature. The eyes of the General brightened with joy as he came to me.

"Forgive, dear Maria, a silly of passion I could not check,——I wish, added he in a whisper, you had not made the trial.——it has exposed me to your displeasure.——

"His Lordship was the cause of it. I was telling him how happy I was in your esteem and tenderness, when hearing you in the next room, he laid me twenty pounds that your esteem would give way to suspicion should you see him steal a kiss from me. To punish his impertinence, and convince him he did not do you justice, I accepted the bet.——the innocence of my intention does not excuse me——I have been indiscreet——

"Make no apology, dear Maria, I have been more guilty than you.——

Amelia! I begin to fear I shall disdain to make such a man my husband—I have just received thy last letter—I do not approve of thy plan,

plan, unless, when thou art married, thou wilt
 feign a severity of virtue, trembling with terror
 at the sole idea of pleasure. Is like Tansho
 D—— sees before him a delicious banquet,
 and cannot partake of it, he shall be the unhap-
 piest wretch alive—thou couldst not think of a
 keener torment; but his misery might affect
 thee—Incessantly attacked, thou wouldst have
 the attempts of passion and despair to oppose—
 thy courage, strength, eloquence, may not al-
 ways be equal to thy desire of conquering—
 Should thy resistance prove, but once, un suc-
 cessful, his victory would compensate for all past
 sufferings, and take from thee the power of farther
 sensals. However great thy resolution, I do
 not advise thee to undertake what ten to one
 thou couldst not accomplish—The thought
 of that fellow enjoying in thy arms, I cannot
 bear—had he but one hour of delight I would
 fancy my revenge lost—I would fancy thee in-
 capable of acting so provokingly as to erase that
 hour from his memory—let him never have
 the sense of that hour to make up for the inju-
 ries thou mightst have done him—Marry him
 not,

not, dear Amelia. D—— loves thee——In-
crease his passion to a disgust of life if he does
not obtain thee——When each sense shall burn
with the fire of desire——when no medium shall
be between thy possession and death, destroy at
once the flattering hopes thou shalt have given
him——scorn him from thy sight——Thus would I
behave were I Amelia. Adieu.

LETTER XXXV.

EDWARD D——, Esq; to General Sc——.

THE more diligently I study Amelia, the less I am tempted to break the chains she gave—Reason approves of my feelings—my mind and heart are equally captivated. I am convinced that levity precludes not good sense, nor coquetry decency—that the woman, who, seemingly, pays homage to Pleasure may be a real votary of Virtue.

We are too prone to despise women, dear John; like the rogue, who suspects all who come near him, we think they are naturally biased to vice, and as careless of their modesty as we are of our morals. Cæsar would have his wife be not only virtuous but even free from
sus-

Suspicion.—Had not that man had the despotism in the heart he would have had it in the head—such nice refinements of honour in the husband of all the Roman wives ! Are we not as unjust as Cæsar ?—Did we give to women the manners they ought to have, never would we have a motive of complaint against them—their violation of decorum is our work.—We have no sooner made them agreeably to our fancy than we repent, and wish them the reverse of what they are. To-day we will have them follow fashion however obnoxious it may be to decency and religion, to-morrow to bury themselves in their houses, and attend solely to the cares of their family——Should they adopt implicitly the form we dream for them, not one week would elapse without an universal alteration as well in their manners as in their dress. Since it is now generally agreed that a young woman who does not, in her appearance, bely the dignity of her character, is a dull, senseless, awkward thing, why do we murmur at her sprightliness and coquetry, and call effects criminal when we are conscious that the cause is inno-

sent?—Like Cæsar, dear John, we will have no partiality but for ourselves.

To Amelia I am indebted for being no longer under the sway of an error, the more stupid and disgraceful that it was voluntary——Amelia has operated a greater miracle——she has made me fond of what I once detested—of what I once thought rather the death than the life of the temptations. My soul has so often spurted up with rapture at the sight of a discreet woman, so seldom at that of a coquette, that, influenced by my feelings, I had concluded the latter an enemy, the former a friend to Nature——Amelia has reversed my judgment——she does not walk one step—speak one word—breathe one smile—dart one look—move one limb, which is not a powerful call to my senses for enjoyment—There is a charm in the *contour* of her neck I feel, and cannot describe——it seems as if it were the seat of wanton Cupids, so happily blended are upon it the lily and rose, the hue of shame and that of desire—though attracted by her speech, I hear not, I gaze——If she is silent, her silence speaks, I listen to it.—

To

To her seducing form, General, Amelia unites the most exquisite virtues, the most delicate wit, the most useful learning, the most agreeable talents. In painting and music she is not inferior to Lady Ligonier; she is her superior in taste and the knowledge of nature. Does she sing, my soul flies forcibly in my ear, and every sense is under the titillation of an unspeakable delight. Amelia does not talk to be admired but to please—According to the difference in the character of her visitors, she varies, or adorns the powers of her reason, or fancy—Be the subject ever so trifling she makes it always new—it is with her conversation as with her countenance—alluring, whether she be gay or serious.

Whenever Amelia comes into the rooms, the spectators feel like the gods at the appearance of Venus proceeding from the sea—joy appears visibly in every eye—a murmur of admiration tells her the impression she makes—the certainty of pleasing adds always to the charms of a handsome woman—At those minutes of general applause, Amelia, Amelia—

O! what sensations she causes then in my breast!
—Amelia turns every man into a *Paris*, ready to kneel, to adore, and to present her with the apple of beauty.

Slander and Calumny the familiar dæmons, who command in this place, have not yet darted their poison at Amelia——She has been, and is still

The charm of ev'ry eye, the praise of ev'ry tongue.

Vanity bespeaks the dress of Amelia, Pride her behaviour——she is equally ambitious of having no rival in graces and elegance, as in the qualities, which characterize a chaste and noble soul——O! how happy I would be, could I warm the lovely maid with the passion that animates my heart!—I fear—Beset as she is with admirers will she welcome my tribute?——I am all diffidence——She listens——but does not answer——She is calm when I pray——but my prayer has not been heard——I have no reason to despair—but no reason to hope——If love, dear John, does not determine Amelia in my favour, the interest of Lady Mary will
avail

avail me nothing—the sensible and virtuous Amelia will never give her hand to the man her heart has not chosen——Were not that heart mine, I would forget myself, and renounce her possession—Believe me, General; unless Amelia be happy, though Death should attend the sacrifice, I would forget myself. Adieu.

LET:

LETTER XXXVI.

Lord C—— to the Earl of W——

MY LORD,

I Have told you I have had an amour with a woman both lovely and contemptible—too much did I rely upon my reason against the power of her charms—it has been over-ruled by my senses; those gave the impulse to my heart, and made my virtue the slave of nature. The circumstances were such, that the allure-ment of pleasure struck my soul delirious, and deadened every thought—Thanks to the unexpected coming of her future husband I have not been guilty——a fatal experience, my Lord, I have had of the weakness of woman !—I despair
of

of ever finding one I can esteem——that fear
 is a real torment to a man of my sensibility.——
 Must I despise what I love best?——it is a sad
 situation.——Every day adds to my apprehensions and contempt——Read, my Lord,
 the list * of the discoveries which have been
 made this week in the world of gallantry.

I am,

My Lord,

with respect,

your most humble,

and obedient servant,

C——

* That list I have thought proper not to print.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXVII,

General Sc—— to EDWARD D——, Esq;

THIS day se'nnight Lady Mary shall be
mine——then I'll have no other wish to
form than to live.

Adieu,

L E T-

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lady MARY H—, to Miss B—,

I AM mad—raving mad——O! for a dagger to pierce the heart of the perfidious wretch!—The villain! He talks of honour!—After he has look'd, spoke, sigh'd, betrayed me into love——after he has abused my tenderness for him, he talks of honour! O! for a dagger, a dagger!—Not contented with forsaking me, he talks of honour to a fond maid, who has sacrificed her modesty to him!—Deadly reproof!—Ungrateful monster! he seduced my reason—corrupted my heart—intoxicated my senses—forced my soul to partake of his transports—yet he talks of honour!—the villain!—

The scorn of Lord C—— is worse than death——Certain of his conquest, he despises it——So long as I opposed his victory, he eagerly fought to obtain it——when I yield, he disdain—nay, insults and reviles me! The affront is intolerable——Were I persuaded that his care of my reputation made him fly from me, my pride satisfied would perhaps forgive him——But he has been in my arms, tenderly pressed to my bosom——Can he think of me, and be discreet, and be careful of my reputation?—No, no, Amelia—Did he love me he would not mind my reputation.——What his motives were to feign an affection for me, I cannot comprehend—Is in some men vanity the sole passion to be gratified?—Do they wish for a good but to neglect it when it is obtained? Is the idea of possession necessarily followed by indifference?——Never yet have I heard of a
con-

conqueror, who slept on the laurels he had got in the day of battle, when fortune favoured him with an actual opportunity of multiplying them—No defects have I in my person—Should a modern *Phidias* want to give life to marble, and create a *Venus*, I might stand candidate for the honour of being her pattern——With the enthusiasm of a lover, Lord C—— always praised me—It was not his words I believed, but his breath, his touch, his looks, his impatience—*Cupid* himself could not more feelingly tell *Psyche* the emotions she caused in his breast—When passion and nature illuminate my eyes with the flame he had kindled in my heart, I lose all my charms, and am abandoned!——Oh! Amelia, my soul is torn by spite and fury—I am mad—raving mad.

* * * * *

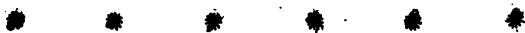
I neither can, nor will have faith in Lord C——'s respect of me—he is too young to respect the woman he loves——his delicacy

is too opposite to the wants of his age——Virtue and extreme desire do not agree together——A voluntary self-denial in a young man who may enjoy !——This miracle I will not credit——Either I have a rival, or he fears the General——his passion can be destroyed but by another——his talking of honour declares him inconstant, or a coward——a coward is the most despicable character in my eye——To value me less than his life ! Would I were convinced this is the cause of his infidelity !—Pride would soon expel him from my heart—A rival !—Two days ago he swore his happiness centered in me——two days ago only !——Amelia ! I have no rival. Apprehensive of being suspected by the General, he is more afraid of his anger than desirous of possessing me——Could I be more humbled ?——Curfed be the hour when I saw Lord C——!



I have

I have thought, Amelia—No other spring of my disgrace can I find than the pusillanimity of Lord C——. He would love me still were he not in awe of the General—How degenerated men are in this age! Heroes when there is no danger—poltroons at the least appearance of it!—To get gold or secure it, a miser would wantonly venture his life—Ought not woman to be to her lover what a treasure is to that miser?—Avarice, Amelia, is a passion—Love a caprice—Nature was sick of creating when she formed our modern men—In her impatience she forgot to favour them with honour and noble feelings—The General has sent his name up—I must smother my indignation, calm my angry soul, and put on a smiling countenance, though rage be in my heart.



The trace of sorrow was visible on my features—the General discovered it, and tenderly enquired for its cause.

“ My

“ My indiscretion, Sir, has robbed me of my
 “ tranquillity—I have not had one moment rest
 “ since I thoughtlessly exposed myself to your
 “ contempt—

“ Dear Maria, the past is forgot—

“ Your generosity does not extenuate my
 “ fault—What will expiate for it?—Tell me—

“ The return of your gaiety, and an increase
 “ of your love for me—

“ To the latter I cannot add—

The expression I gave to those words brought
 the General at my feet——he amorously took
 my hand in his, and carried it to his heart—how
 it panted!—My looks answered its heaves—

“ I will, Sir, forbid my presence to Lord
 “ C——— —Never more will I receive him—
 “ Between you and me let us for the future have
 “ love and happiness only——

And the sigh of real tenderness escaped from
 my lips.

“ Ex-

“ Excellent creature !—You shall not dismiss
 “ Lord C—— from your society——Upon
 “ my honour I am not jealous——

“ I have at heart the kifs he stole——

“ It is a trifle, dear Maria——

“ My virtue is not so indulgent——at the
 “ sight of his Lordship I cannot help being
 “ ashamed of myself——give me leave to put an
 “ end to his visits——

The General, the over-joyed General muttered his consent on my lips.

“ With you my modesty is not so tenacious
 “ of her rights——

He took one kifs again.

“ To the husband, not the lover, I grant
 “ these favours——my honour is not offended at
 “ the innocent liberties you take.——

Inebriated with love, and my captivating behaviour, the General could but sigh, look, and smile.

“ Why,

“ Why, dear Maria, did he at last stammer,
“ why have you delayed my felicity ?—Thurs-
“ day next !—This day might have been the
“ day—I adore you—I am impatient——”

“ Talk not thus, Sir——”

And I affected a delusive confusion.

Amelia ! though the General said he was not
jealous, I plainly saw he was delighted with the
sacrifice I made him of Lord C——. An evil I
have turned into good—It is a poor remedy
against the mortal anxiety to which I am a prey
—Oh !—My spirits are in a flame—Reason and
pride come in vain to my help—I must not stay
alone—I thought I had the soul of a philosopher
—Alas ! I am but a woman.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Miss S——, to Miss A——.

A Most extraordinary visit we have received to-day, dear Charlotte: I am not yet recovered from my surprize. Lord and Lady L—— came to dine with us, and brought with them Lord C—— —Lord C——, the pretended lover of Lady Mary. After Lady L—— had presented him to me, she whispered in my ear, “ He is a man I esteem and respect.” Her praise had a meaning, which I understood for a while I would consider him in the same light as she did. Had she not bribed my regard for him, the decency and dignity of his conduct would have forced it from me. Lord

C—— spoke little ; but what he spoke was as well thought, as it was well expressed—gay, and yet discreet—witty and yet reasonable—He displayed all the good qualities of youth without betraying one of its defects. In his behaviour to me he was polite and reserved.

“ How do you like my cousin, dear Jenny,
“ said Lady L—— to me after dinner ?—

“ If he is not in a mask, my lady, he seems
“ a man of honour—

“ In a mask ! Pray explain yourself—

“ I have heard of Lord C——

“ To his disadvantage ?

“ Yes, madam.—

“ It is all calumny ; I would swear to it——

“ Tell me, dear Jenny, what you have heard
“ of him—

Then, Charlotte, without mentioning the name of Lady Mary and the General, I disclosed to her the intrigue of his Lordship with the former.

“ The

“ The charge is grave—were it founded, I
 “ would despise him——Too base the action is,
 “ Jenny, to be true—I know Lord C——
 “ he has a noble soul; a soul that would scorn
 “ to deceive, to build its happiness upon the
 “ disgrace of another——You have painted a
 “ monster totally lost to humanity and virtue—
 “ Lord C—— is a man——he loves not the
 “ young beauty you say he is enamoured with—

And darting an expressive glance at me, she repeated—

“ He loves not the young beauty you say he
 “ is enamoured with—I am certain of it—

“ I have had from very good authority that
 “ he does love her, my lady——I wish it were
 “ false, for the sake of them both—

“ Do you rely upon my friendship for you,
 “ Jenny?—

“ I do, my lady—

“ Be sure then I would not prejudice you in
 “ favour of a man unworthy of you—

“ Un-

“ Unworthy of me, madam ! I do not understand you—

She smiled, and joined the company. I sat down, seeking for the sense of her words and smile. My eyes wandering accidentally on Lord C——, I surpris'd him gazing earnestly upon me. I arose, without knowing why, and walk'd to a chair next to my mother's—then I got up again, and stepped to the chimney, from whence I came back to my former seat—Still uneasy, I went to my harpsichord, muttering inwardly, “ What is the matter with me ? ” No satisfactory answer could I give. I took a music book, turned over every leaf of it, when reflecting at last on the ridiculousness of my deportment, I grew calm, and came near lady L——.

“ I was in hopes, madam, said Lord C——, “ you would favour us with a tune—

I curtsied, with a blush, I believe—— What a fool I was !——I turned to the harpsichord, and exerted all my powers of pleasing. Lord and lady L—— said I was an adept—Lord C—— begged for another tune—no other praise did I obtain from him.

The

The words and smile of lady L—— intruded incessantly into my mind—Desirous of knowing their signification, I interpreted them in twenty different manners, and never to my satisfaction. Lady L—— tapped me upon the shoulder.

“ You are very thoughtful, Jenny—

“ You made me so, madam—

At that instant I heard Lord C—— ask leave of my mother to wait upon her—

“ Does his Lordship intend, my Lady, to reside in the country ?—

That question lady L—— mistook for concern.

“ Will you thank me if I say, Yes ?—

“ I !—For what ? He may stay—he may go—

“ He may stay !—he may go !—Which should you like best ?

“ He is welcome to choose—

“ Are you insensible to the pleasure of conversing with a man of merit ?—

“ No, madam : but that pleasure will not make me regret his absence—

“ Nor wish for his company ?—

“ Neither,

“ Neither, my lady.—

“ You will not always answer thus—

“ I hope not—God forbid I ever desire the

“ presence of a man who has no merit!—I

“ should be unhappy indeed, did I love a man

[“ in whom I could not glory—

“ Have you met with a lover you can boast ?

“ —Be plain, Jenny—

“ I have not—

“ Your heart is free ?—

“ I think it is—

“ Last week you was sure it was free—now

“ you only think it is—How long have you

“ been uncertain ?—

“ You are worse than a confessor, my lady.

“ You will attribute to words a meaning he

“ often overlooks in the feelings of his peni-

“ tents.—

“ He is led by curiosity only, I by friend-

“ ship—Let me dive into the secret of

“ your

“ your real situation—I have a powerful interest]

“ to be acquainted with it—

“ I have told it you already—

“ You love not ?—

“ You want to persuade me I do—How can

“ you flatter yourself to succeed, conscious as

“ you are I have no lover ?—

“ I have a mind to give you one—

“ Thank you, my lady—

“ Will you receive him from my hands ?—

“ I know not.—our tastes may not agree—

“ We can differ only in the form of the

“ man——As to his character our opinion

“ shall be the same——Tell me—but let us

“ remove further——we must not be heard.—

I followed her to the window, my heart panting with curiosity,

“ I have a friend, Jenny, who in his features,

“ shape and manners, is almost like lord C——

“ —Would you have a disgust to such a per-

“ son ? —— Before you answer, observe his

“ lordship well—

“ You

“ You said, “ Almost like lord C——”

“ Suppose that no distinction could be made
“ between them——

“ Suppose, my lady, I am pleased with the
“ person, what then?——

“ The “ what then” will end in matrimony——
“ Blush not, sweet, lovely girl——The husband I
“ will give you shall have the virtues of Jenny,
“ and make her happy.——

“ Are you certain I shall be loved?——

“ As certain as I am of your beauty, sensibi-
“ lity and discretion——

“ You are certain, and yet I have not been
“ seen by the lover you intend for me!——

“ Have I said he has not seen you?——

I turned my eyes upon lord C—— “ Is he
the man?”——This reflection I did not speak.
Lady L—— had followed the motion of my
eyes, and seen them fixed upon his lordship——

“ Tell me your thought, Jenny——

I would have ingenuously told it, had not
lord C—— come to us. His carriage, dear
Char-

Charlotte, not countenancing the reflection I had made, I fancied he was not the friend lady L— had spoke of. That idea conquered my confusion; I enjoyed, the rest of the evening, my usual tranquillity of mind. Our guest retired an hour ago—To-morrow we meet again at her ladyship's—I will reflect no more on what I have seen, and heard; it would perplex, and not satisfy my reason. Adieu.

L E T;

LETTER XL.

Lord C——, to the Earl of W——.

MY LORD,

HONOUR and delicacy bidding me to avoid a woman, whose tenderness I could not return, without being guilty of a crime I daily exclaimed against, I wrote to her that her fame required the sacrifice of my passion—— Agreeably to the notions of the polite world, I have been a villain, “not for having seduced—” “but for having repented, and not abused the “credulous maid.” I dare say, my Lord, that this offence will enflame the heart of my late mistress with fury——Such neglect after such transports!——The vanity of a coquette, who values her beauty more than her virtue, can not forgive the lover, who scorns the happiness she offers.—

offers—When I had announced the discontinuation of my visits, I resolved to make no further trial, and wished to forget the experience I had unfortunately acquired. Those reflections preying upon my mind, I went out in search of dissipation. In my way to the opera, I stopped at the dutchess of ~~P~~^{Perth}~~shire~~^{shire}'s; and I found her surrounded by a lovely circle of court beauties, among whom she shone like Diana in the midst of her nymphs. My eyes were delighted with the matchless sight; but my heart was calm—I looked upon them as exquisitely made machines, admired their motions and attitudes—but admired only—They talked, and I said, “Vanity is the spring of their life.” The duke’s happiness filled my soul with envy—“Heaven! exclaimed I inwardly, give me such a wife as he possesses!” Just as I finished my prayer, the countess dowager of F—— entered the drawing-room. The dutchess, sensible of the merit of her noble visitor, went immediately to her with an air which expressed—“You have relieved me, my lady; I was tired of the childish conversation of the company I am with.” Her
attention

attention to the countess confirmed my observation—She seemed to have forgot we were present. Would young ladies not be blind to the behaviour of the women they ought to respect, they would see in it either their praise or satire—The glass does not tell them more faithfully the charms or defects of their persons, than that behaviour their good or bad qualities. I know not a keener reproof, or a more flattering eulogium than the esteem, or indifference of a dutchess of P——d. Self-love will not be advised; the presence of lady F——, and the reservedness of the dutchess, did not silence the foolish, lovely, chattering creatures. One of them defended lady Glovernor with a fire extremely ominous to her virtue—Lady F—— started at the name of lady G——; she turned to the dutchess—

“ Good God! my lady dutchess, desire those
 “ young ladies not to mention such a name—
 “ have they no respect for themselves?—

Her desire, my lord, being not whispered,
 some cheeks coloured instantly with shame,
 whilst spite and indignation flush'd up into the
 face

face of others. Lady B—L— was the only one, who answered lady F—— with a smile of contempt—Intrepid lady B— L— ! I know not, my lord, when this lady has done honour to her sex—She seizes so eagerly every opportunity of disgracing it, that one would swear it is a natural want of her soul.

“ What the duce are you disturbed for,
 “ cried she to her friends with the supercilious
 “ tone of superiority? Is the grave, solemn
 “ countess F—— to dictate your conduct?
 “ Lady G—— is the topic of the day; why
 “ should you not sit in judgment upon her, and
 “ be free in the sentence you chuse to pro-
 “ nounce?—

“ Your defence of her conduct, replied
 “ lady F——, may be thought an approba-
 “ tion of it—

“ Lord! madam, who would draw such a
 “ preposterous consequence? I hope there are
 “ no fools among us—

“ Put the question to these gentlemen, Lady
 “ B——. Will you stand by their decision?—

“ With

“ With all my heart, madam.—

And assuming the carriage of a conqueror,
she asked our opinion. Unwilling to give it,
I arose—

“ You shan’t go, my lord, before you have
“ done me justice—fear not—the countess will
“ not appeal from your judgment—

“ Permit me to be neuter, my lady.—

“ Lord ! what are you afraid of ? The coun-
“ tess will forgive—Won’t you, my lady?—

“ I will indeed—

“ Now, my lord, be pleased to pronounce—

“ You insist upon it?—

“ I do, my lord.—

“ Well, my lady, the woman, who can earnestly
“ take the part, or extenuate the crime of lady
“ G——, gives me but an indifferent idea of
“ her modesty—

Lady B—L— did not betray the least sense
of displeasure—

“ Your

“ Your politeness, my lord, is adequate to
“ your understanding : I compliment you upon
“ both.—

I shrugged up my shoulders with contempt,
and sat down.

“ Perhaps, my lady, said the countess, the
“ other gentlemen will be more favourable—

“ Oh! ma’am, I am quite satisfied. The
“ sagacious lord C—— cannot err—

And she burst into laughter.

“ I have spoke a truth I wish your ladyship
“ were more sensible of—— None but lady
“ B— L— would make a jest of it.—

Lady B— L— feigning not to hear, the
conversation took a new turn.

My attention, my lord, during our debate
had often been taken up by a picture on the
lid of lady F——’s snuff-box. Yielding at last
to a forcible curiosity, I begg’d of her ladyship
to let me view that picture. I cannot tell you
my emotions at the sight of the most lovely
and expressive physiognomy I ever beheld—

I was

I was quite in raptures—"How beautiful and moving! exclaimed I, insensible of what I said!" Every eye was directly inquisitive for the cause of my admiration.

"This is, I fear, the work of fancy---is it not, my lady?"

"No, my lord. My niece is the original;

"Your niece!"

And I paused trembling, fearful to ask whether she was married or not.

"Is there any thing so miraculous in that picture as to justify your enthusiasm, my lord?" asked lady Almeria C——r.

"Look, madam—here are your eyes,—your lips,---your half smile,---the same bloom of health——Pass to this bosom—observe how charmingly blended are the white, the blue and the rose——Don't you see through the ivory skin that artery beat?—Were it not for the *ensemble* which in you is more gay, I would think you sat to this picture—it is another yourself under a different form——Will you now say my enthusiasm is not justified?"

You

" You have bribed my impartiality, my lord ;
" did I commend your taste, I would be both
" judge and party——Miss S—— is not flat-
" tered—you will find her still more amiable---

" Miss S—— say you?—have you known
" her?—is she married?---

" Which question, my lord, shall I answer
" first? asked lady Almeria with a most en-
" chanting smile---

" The last---

" She is not married---

" You have made me happy——You praise
" her! a woman of your good sense and refined
" discernment cannot mistake in the judgment
" she forms---

" I wish, my lord, it were fashionable to
" glory in the virtues and manners of Miss S---

" That wish is worthy of lady Almeria. For-
" give one question more----Where does Miss
" S—— live?---

" At her mother's in Berkshire.---My lord.--

" My lady?---

“ You have been very plain with Lady
 “ B— L—; be as honest with me—tell me
 “ in what light the world beholds me—Far
 “ from being offended, I’ll gratefully thank
 “ you for your sincerity—If, unknown to me,
 “ I have faults, acquaint me with them that I
 “ may mend.—

“ You are both loved and respected.—

• Lady Almeria blushed thanks, and stepped
 to her chair.

I went to Lady F——.

“ However exquisite the art of the painter,
 “ my Lady, Lady Almeria C——r affirms that
 “ Miss S—— is superior to it.—

“ Lady Almeria, though a beauty, can
 “ suffer a rival—her modesty is no novelty to
 “ me—she has done justice to my niece.—

I gave the picture back; my Lord, I thought
 I gave my heart with it—Impatient to enjoy by
 myself the new sensations I felt, I went home,
 and gave every hour sleep did not ravish from
 me, to the thought of Miss S——. Yesterday
 morning by nine o’clock I was here. Lord

and

and Lady L—— were at once surprised and overjoyed at my unexpected visit.

“ Whom must we thank for your company,
“ cried they at one and the same time?—

“ Miss S——.—

“ Miss S——! exclaimed her ladyship—is
“ it possible? My dear sweet Jenny!—Oh!
“ my Lord, tell me you love her—

I told them the impression her picture had made upon me. Lady L—— heard me with transport—

“ Your sentiments for her Miss S—— will
“ confirm——Cousin, if you please my vir-
“ tuous friend Jenny, you shall be the happiest
“ of men—she is an excellent girl!—Beauty,
“ sense, wit, talents, virtues adorn her person,
“ and form her character——Jenny is perhaps
“ the sole woman praises cannot injure—Though
“ I should be lavish of them, when you see her,
“ you will not hesitate to think, and to say that
“ I have not given her her due.—

“ Amiable as she is, she must have admirers—

“ Jenny

“ Jenny is not a coquette, my lord——never
“ will she encourage the addresses of the man
“ she does not sincerely esteem——Believe me;
“ she is insensible of the admiration she causes——

“ Nobody has yet pleased her?——

“ I think I might safely swear that nobody has——

“ Favour the longing expectation I am in to—
“ see Miss S——.

“ To-day we will dine with her——

“ Let her not know the motive of my visit——

“ Don't betray yourself——you will find it
“ difficult to keep that secret in your heart——

“ Before I disclose it, I will have no doubt of
“ her triumph.——

We went to M—— Hall, the seat of Mrs.
S——, my Lord——The god of Hymen, the
incessant object of my dislike and satire, has at
last revenged his injuries——he conspired against
me with Cupid——their united powers I have not
been able to resist. I love—for the first time I
love——my former inclinations caprice dictated——
my actual passion is the work of sentiment——
it increases by reflection——reflection, before,
made

made me always indifferent.—I love, and am so happy as to be forced to esteem the woman I love.—It is not from my feelings I judge of her worth—her worth has created my feelings—She is the reality of the *portrait* my fond imagination has often drawn of a beauty animated by virtue.—When I had been an hour with her, my heart beat at the likeness of the features—I said to Lady I.—, “ This is the woman I have dreamed of—no other can make me happy.”

Though I endeavoured to conceal my thoughts, an indiscreet glance of my eye declared them to her.—How bewitching the confusion that glance threw her in! As modesty only might have caused it, I grew fearful to offend before I had deserved a claim to her forgiveness. The desire of obtaining her esteem commanded my behaviour.—“ When I have got it, said I to myself, my looks will talk the language of love without alarming her virtue.”—Perhaps, my Lord, was I too reserved—The moment I substituted respect to passion, Miss S—— partook calmly of the conversation—

That

That respect, if she had interpreted the glance of my eye for an expression of tenderness, was as obnoxious as it was unreasonable—But here comes the lovely maid, my Lord—just alighted—My heart leaps for joy—How she trips along!—There is no vanity in her dress—elegance only—Forgive, my Lord, but I must abruptly subscribe myself

Your Lordship's

Most humble,

And devoted servant,

C——

L E T-

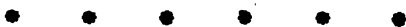
LETTER XLI.

Lady MARY H—, to Miss B—.

HELL and furies! Perish the man my charms could not captivate—who abandoned me without a pang of sorrow! O! Amelia, I'll run distracted—A new injury I have received from Lord C——; an injury, which calls for curses and death upon the miserable who did it—My soul is wrapt up in an agony of rage—revenge is the sole passion I can indulge—revenge, dear revenge, how shall I effect thee! I am too exasperated to think of it—my head partakes of the confusion of my heart—Could I resolve, I could not execute—in my fury my hand would tremble, and secure the object of my hatred against the mortal blow—

His

His death is the only relief my despair will welcome—Rather than he should complete my disgrace, with him I would descend to the grave, with a wish that I might there revive again to be his everlasting tormentor—Tortures unknown to the infernal shades I would invent to punish the perfid—I would make the Furies themselves shudder at the exquisiteness of the pains I should inflict—make all hell unite in a cry for mercy—Amelia! my blood is burning-hot—I must breathe, or thy friend shall be no more.



Curfed be that decorum, which forbids an abused maid to revenge her wrongs! Like children we must paffively bear with every indignity!—Whilst men, for the moft insignificant insult, cut one another's throats, we are ordered to fmother our refentments—to shut our hearts to paffions they perpetually rouse and enflame.

enflame—How abject the state of woman! Nature! take back the sensibility thou hast given us!—It is an excruciating pain to feel an affront, and be compelled to endure it.—Men have debased us, that they might with impunity favour their senseless whims, and wanton inhumanity—Why don't they at once, like Mahomet, deprive us of a soul? Were we brought up in the idea we have none, we would have no other will than theirs—Then we would tamely submit to the yoke, and be careless of infamy. More consistent this political creed would be with the sacrifices they incessantly require from us—Accustomed from our infancy to believe we were created for the sole purpose of making them happy, we would have no sense of their tyranny—Content would attend our credulity—But such as we are! passions being the effects of education, and our intercourse with the world, can we be cool when they rage violently in our breast?—The law of nature was before that of society—the former only I will obey—it commands my obedience in a more forcible manner than the

the

the latter———So long as I shall think, I will not be a slave———Lord C———, thou shalt die!——to punish thee I'll brave the contempt of mankind!



Read, Amelia; read the crime I intend to revenge. A few hours after Lord C——— had written to me that my reputation required his absence, he went to the duchess of P——d's. There he met Lady F———, who, unluckily for me, had upon the lid of her snuff-box the picture of Miss S———, her niece. That picture striking Lord C———, he viewed it with an ecstatic admiration——his admiration broke out into the most extravagant praises, and ended, and ended, Amelia, in love.—Lady B—— L——, who was present, pierced my heart two hours ago with the odious tale. I immediately sent to Lord C———, and learnt he set out this morning for L—— Castle, the seat of
Lady

Lady L——, in Berkshire. Reflect now, Amelia, on the number of affronts he has heaped upon me. He feigned a passion I foolishly believed to be real, and forsook me without any other motives than his indifference, or contempt of me. Next, he loves—whom does he love? a woman, who, almost certain I adored him, will grace her triumph with my misfortune!—a woman, who having reproved me for my coquetry, and severely questioned my virtue, will treat me with all the insolence of victory!—Of all women, Miss S—— is the only one I wish he did not love—and she is the object of his inclination!—The thought will break my heart—Perhaps, at the moment I write, she receives the tender of his hand she knows he did not deign to offer it to me!—O! Amelia, can my situation be more deplorable and disgraceful?—That Miss S—— should fire a heart I could not affect! amazing, amazing, Amelia!



I am

I am the more miserable that thou art absent, that I have nobody to whom I can trust my secret, whom I can advise with—Shall I write to Miss S——? Let me think—Her virtue is so tender!—She may believe—Could I succeed to prejudice her against Lord C——, I would drop the thought of another revenge—Death would be a favour to an unhappy lover—I will try—If I am baffled in my expectation, the General I'll work into a thirst of his blood—Should Lord C—— win the day, not long would he boast his advantage—To his heart, Amelia, I'll find the way. Adieu.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

Lady MARY H—, to Miss S—.

SO long, dear Jenny, as I thought that Lord C— deserved the public esteem, I could not, without laying myself open to censure, expel him from my society. Private motives, however just and rational, are not always an excuse with the world for breaking with our acquaintances—— Those motives, interpreted agreeably to the difference in the character of our judges, would often appear to the disadvantage either of our heart, or our understanding—— Had I refused the visits of his Lordship under the pretext that it might be fancied we loved one another, I would undoubtedly have been ridiculed, or laughed at. Malignity

is so seldom asleep when an opportunity offers to slander, that, through the fear of satisfying her natural want, we are compelled to sacrifice our most favourite inclinations——Hence we forcibly welcome people we hate, and neglect those we consider——Every one of us in social life is like a courtier dissembling his contempt with smiles, and his friendship with frowns——Self-interest dictates his behaviour, Opinion ours.

Though sincerely wishing, dear Jenny, to get rid of a visitor, whose assiduity threatened me with the loss of thy esteem, never would I have given him his *congé*, had not some friends initiated me into the knowledge of his principles and character. Facts, and not words, have convinced me of the danger of his connexion——His proceedings with almost every young woman he has feigned to be enamoured of, would fill thee with indignation—he speaks but to betray—to many he has tendered his hand, which, when accepted, he has always refused with sneering and scorn——He exerts all his powers to gain the affections of a virtuous maid, and then puts his glory in forsaking her—I would doubt there

is

is such an ungenerous man alive, were I not personally acquainted with some of the wretches he has made——As he never offended me, dear Jenny, I will not finish his *portrait*—he is young ; he may reform.

The decent and noble conduct of General Sc— has conquered my indifference—though I cannot say I have a decided passion for him, I love him enough to wish to become his wife—Thursday next I shall have a man of honour for my husband—If with his tendernefs I can boast thy friendship, I shall be supremely happy. Adieu.

L E T.

L E T T E R X L I I I .

Miss B—— to Lady MARY H——.

SUCH a pother about a man ! For shame, Maria ! Put that fellow out of thy mind—thy indignation is an honour he deserves not. Be his motives for deserting thee what they will, it is below thee to be affected by them. Hadst thou favoured him, thou might'st be sensible to his inconstancy——The sense of thy sacrifices to him would have justified thy anger—After thee, I would, perhaps, have ecchoed “for a dagger, a dagger !” His loss thou should'st thank heaven for : had he been happy, he would have proved a villain to thee—to his levity, indiscretion might have been added—This consequence

is naturally drawn from his conduct with thee—forget that fellow, Maria—it matters not whether cowardice, or indifference be the cause of his fickleness—he is unworthy of thee ; this certainty is enough—Thy fury is as childish as it is preposterous. A sharper robs a man of his money—dost thou think this man will draw his sword to recover it?—No : he lets the rascal enjoy his theft ; and profiting by his experience, grows more cautious in the choice of the company he plays with. Between Lord C—— and that sharper I see no difference : imitate the dupe, and find in thy misfortune an antidote against future events of that kind. Mankind is divided into two species, knaves and fools : the great outlines of this truth are to be discovered among them all, notwithstanding the various shades which characterise and distinguish them from each other. Expecting to be imposed upon, I am attentive and watchful—Should I, in one unguarded moment, fall a victim to a superior ingenuity, I would not one hour be disturbed for it. What would my complaints avail?—What my sorrow, rage, or despair?—Nothing.

Maria, be no longer foolish—the present race of men is too contemptible to beggar us of our tranquillity of mind—We should consider them as we do a play, a novel, an auction, convenient to fill up agreeably the hours we either know not what to do with, or chuse to give up to the gratification of our senses. To look upon man in another light is an error of judgment, which, by degrees, may become obnoxious to our happiness. Unless we be cool, and calm, rouse the passions of men, and turn them to our advantage, we must be their slaves. The wretches have no resistance against the united powers of wit and beauty; it is our fault if we know pain, and do not enjoy every delight.

I bid thee, Maria, under pain of my displeasure, to discard all thoughts of revenge against Lord C——. Extol not by thy enmity the fame of the man thou despisest—a fruitless attempt would cover him with glory—thee with infamy. If thou art ambitious of having thy name transmitted to the latest posterity, and of reviving the power of love unknown in this age, strike Lord C——; but let the dagger
from

from his heart be plunged into thy own—Thou shuddereſt, Maria!——Thy death only could ennoble thy crime and juſtify thee——Such is the human mind formed, that all would admire thy courage, none think of thy guilt. I believe thee too wiſe, Maria, to obtain that admiration and celebrity at the expence of thy life.

• • • • •

My eſquire D—— grows every day more and more deſperately fond of me—Signor S——i more and more intereſting—What life in thoſe Italians! There is a voluptuouſneſs in their impotency I doubt reality can excel—Even their deſpair is a ſpring of delightful ſenſations—According to the opinion of my enamorado, love in England is only a ſentiment, in Italy a paſſion—He pretends we have not half their ſenſibility—that our wants are mere caprices——their caprices wants—

“ I am not a judge, ſays I to him—but from
“ the proofs you give I am tempted to believe
“ you.”

From

“ From the proofs you give, dear Amelia, answers he amorously, I am tempted to recant.”

His praises please me—— the *why*? I know not. Adio.

L E T.

LETTER XLV.

Miss S——, to Miss A——.

JUST come back from L—— Castle, dear Charlotte—No longer, I am afraid, can I boast my indifference—The want of loving, so long dormant in my heart, has awaked at the looks and expressions of Lord C——. He has spoke, and I have heard—nay, heard with pleasure—His language was not that, in which thou and I write and converse—his eyes, gesture, absence of mind, and wishes I could guess what he did not dare to talk, told plainly that he loved me. I know not whether I did not betray my joy at the spectacle of the emotions I caused—In spite of modesty, I was not
always

always able to conceal it. Twice he drew near me—on his features I read what he was going to say—he opened his lips—I blushed—he sighed, gazed upon me, and the words expired on his tongue——He played with a beautiful sprig of jeffamin—I looked as if I wanted it—he presented it to me——with a smile I put it to my bosom—He begged I would sing—and I immediately sung—he praised my voice—that moment, only, I was sensible of its beauty. More tender than gay, more free than severe, I partook of the conversation, and shared in the trouble of Lord C——. I surprised the eyes of Lady L—— fixed upon me—in them I distinctly perceived her satisfaction of my conduct—that discovery made me reserved—I thought Lord C—— would understand me, since her Ladyship had been so successful in her scrutiny of my sentiment—The silence of my countenance, dear Charlotte, was a lie to my ingenuity I wished I could have dispensed with—to be modest I was false—that necessity men have imposed upon us—they are inclined to abuse our feelings for them, that they compel us to bury them in our breast

breast——would they were always honest, that we might be always true !

What eloquence and energy in the form of a lover ! Every motion, or reverie calls forcibly for our attention, and unravels the sensations he feels. Like an historical picture done by a master, in which, at first sight, we know the characters of the personages, the heart of Lord C—— laid open before me——The real sense of its throbbings I could not have mistaken, had I been ever so indifferent. Had he spoke, I would have been put upon my guard—the leisure he gave me to reflect on what I saw——
O Charlotte, Charlotte ! No longer, I am afraid, can I boast my indifference.

* * * * *

“ Jenny, whispered Lady L—— in my ear,
“ I hate Lord C——.

“ For what, my Lady ?—

“ For

“ For expressing so ill the inclination you have inspired him with. Don’t you think his discretion impertinent ?—

“ And you really think he has been discreet ?—

A smile was her answer. Sometime after a servant came with a letter for me. I turned to my mother, and said it was from Lady Mary H—. I darted a side glance at Lord C——, and saw no confusion in his looks. Lady L—— insisting upon my reading the letter, I broke it open, and stepped to the window. It was a libel against Lord C——, whom she painted in the most odious light—A colouring rose in my cheeks, and an involuntary tear flowed from my eye—Lady L—— perceiving the sudden flutter of my spirits, tript to me—

“ I want some air, my Lady ; let us go the garden.

The tone of my voice was expressive of sorrow—Lord C—— arose—his countenance, Charlotte, betrayed no guilt—I had the courage to gaze upon him—

“ What ails the lovely Miss S—— ?

I made

I made no reply, and continued to search for the man of honour in the lover. The composure of his mind calmed me—I perused the letter again—

“ You know Lady Mary H—, my Lord ?

“ I do, madam—

And he smiled.

“ There is no hypocrisy in that smile, said I
“ to myself—he is innocent of the charge laid
“ against him—Envy has dictated that letter—
“ and exclaiming thoughtlessly, “ it is impos-
“ sible,” I tore it to pieces, and threw them
“ out of the window.

“ I am better, my Lady—

And I joined the company.

The vivacity of my action, and the recovery of my usual cheerfulness, declaring evidently to Lord C—— that my heart had sided in his favour against Lady Mary H—, he approached my ear.

“ Your generosity announces a noble and
“ virtuous soul : never shall you repent the jus-
“ tice

“ tice you have done me—the man, who knows
“ your value—who wishes to be esteemed by
“ you, cannot be base—

“ In the respect of Lady L—— for you, my
“ Lord, I have seen your innocence—

“ Would you had found the proofs of it in
“ your own heart !—I—

Fearful to hear, I went to sit by the side of
Lady L——

“ Whence your confusion, Jenny ?

“ I won’t tell—guess it—

“ Lord C—— is the cause——am I right ?—

“ You are, dear my Lady.

And I sighed.

Charlotte ! Can I now boast my indifference ?

L E T.

L E T T E R XLVI.

Lady MARY H— to Miss B—→

THY reason, Amelia, would not have prevailed over my fury, and thirst of revenge——It is not with arguments we can conquer passions——feelings defy all the powers of eloquence——Though thy philosophy be my own, my heart had so effectually taken the lead of my head, that its dictates were an irresistible law. To General Sc—— himself, Amelia, I am indebted for the cure of my frenzy: the remedy he has presented to me has operated in one instant, and restored me to my usual composure of mind.

Whilst I was brooding yesterday upon the means of a sure revenge, the General came in
with

with a physician, whose sight only calmed immediately my spirits, and made me almost forget the object of my hatred.

“ Give me leave, my Lady, to introduce to your Ladyship Captain Suth—. He is my relation, and friend: of all men I love him the best.—

“ By Venus, that’s a fine fellow! said I to myself.

And with a confusion, that, unknown to me, stole into my features, I offered him my cheek. That confusion, I know not how, left me soon to animate the countenance of the Captain. His attempt to conceal it made it still more conspicuous. As the General might have my sagacity, I diverted his attention by smiles, and gave time to the Captain to recover himself.

General Sc—— exhausted himself in praises of the gallant youth, whom he tenderly called a “ child of his own creation.” For the first time, Amelia, he spoke as I liked to hear him—My heart echoed every eulogium—and though the picture he drew of Suth—— was extremely lovely, I thought it rather deficient than rich in colouring.

“ With

“ With this my bosom friend, my Lady,
 “ you will pass the hours I shall be absent
 “ from you. Gay, witty, entertaining, you will
 “ find in him an agreeable companion in the
 “ succession of amusements, your age, virtue,
 “ or fortune will permit you to enjoy.—

I smothered, Amelia, the satisfaction I felt,
 and answered coldly that his will would be mine.

Is not the General very kind to provide for
 me an attendant, who has so fine a person as
 Captain Suth—? To him he trusts his honour!
 He knows the world, and supposes that grati-
 tude will keep him dumb and insensible! How
 can Suth—— and I, by ourselves in my chim-
 ney corner, pass the long—long winter evenings,
 without admitting Love for a third in the con-
 versation? Alone with me—and he will not
 desire my possession! Alone with him—and
 my heart will not beat to a want of pleasure!
 We will have no temptation! He will gaze—I
 will smile—And we will have no temptation!—
 our mutual confusion tells me the contrary——
 Amelia! the guardian angel of my virtue will
 be its enemy—Whose fault will it be? the
 General's. Adieu.

L E T T E R L X V I I .

EDWARD D——, *Esq;* to General Sc——.

I HAVE taken my leave of Miss Amelia B——, taken it, dear General, with the utmost indifference——From the most amorous of men, a trifling incident has made me the most insensible. What can that passion be, which gives so easily way to spite and vanity? My senses had deluded me into the belief I really loved——Had my heart been captivated, I would not so readily have resented an insignificant injury, and recovered my liberty.

As I entered this morning the dressing room of Miss B——, I thoughtlessly tread upon the tail of her lap-dog. Cupid screamed—Miss B——grew red with anger—called me an awkward fellow—

fellow—flew to the little animal, and took him in her arms.

“Fellow, muttered I!—

And I darted at her a look of indignation. Miss B—— burst into laughter, and bid me, with an air excellently impertinent, out of her dressing-room.

“And I thought I was loved! exclaimed I.

“Did you really think so? Ah, ah, ah!—

“Pray, gentle 'squire, carry to another a heart

“I have no need of—Let this be the last time

“I see you.—

And humming a song, she passed by me, dropped a curtsy of contempt, and went down to her mother's.

This is an odd adventure, said I to myself. I searched into my heart, and found I was no longer a lover. Adieu.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Miss B—— to Lady MARY H——.

Sensible of his disadvantages, the General has appointed Captain Suth—— to watch thy conduct—his mistrust of thee deserves a reward—no other can become him better than a confirmation of his fears. A suspicious husband is unworthy of thy pity—turn his spy into a lover. I admire how old and grave men can be such fools. Did General Sc—— never attend to the observation of *Manly* in the play, “That if you are made a cuckold, it is by your friend, because your enemy has no access to your house?”

The man, who marries thee for himself, and not for thee, has no right to thy esteem and constancy.

constancy. He must know thou dost not love him : his own reason has told him that truth, whenever he has taken the trouble to think of the disparity of your age, tastes, and disposition. If ever thou wishest thy husband younger than he is, thou ^{wilt} ~~shalt~~ forcibly, from that moment, pay a particular attention to the Captain, or any other man——then——then, the sense of thy duty will not be a sufficient restraint upon thee. This consequence the General is too prudent not to have foreseen——Since he wantonly exposes himself to a disgrace he can avoid, whoever hears of thee will find his own heart the most powerful advocate for thy infidelity.

Would the judges at Doctors Commons take the part of morality, they would punish such husbands, and confirm, or even double the jointures of their wives. This conduct would teach men the knowledge of themselves, and deter them from violating the laws of nature, and treating us like slaves.

* * * * *

Signor S——i has appeared uneasy at the frequent visits of Esquire D——. To please him, I have given his *Congé* to the latter. That man only I value, who is agreeable or useful to me——Adio cara mia.

LET-

L E T T E R. XLIX.

Lord C—— to the Earl of W——.

MY LORD,

TO Beauty and Virtue I have yielded the victory—I have spoke as I felt; and Miss S——'s modesty has answered me. My pen could not tell you my happiness—in my looks only you can see it.—From you, my Lord, I will receive Miss S——. Post immediately away for L—— Castle——Pity the impatience of a lover. I am, with respect,

My Lord,

Your most humble servant,

C——.

L E T-

L E T T E R L.

General SC— to EDWARD D—, *Esq.*

WHEN I pronounced yesterday the awful
Yes, my tongue faltered—my heart
sbrunk—I felt a trembling in every limb—Had
not Lady Mary smiled upon me, I fear I would
have made a very ridiculous figure. I am not
superstitious, dear Ned ; yet I could not help
thinking ominous the agitation I was in. I so
old—the so young!—there is such a contrast
between the gaiety of her countenance, and the
gravity of my own—between the fire of her de-
sires, and the deadness of my spirits!—These
reflections, Ned, were not encouraging—-I saw
my presumption in its true light, and shuddered
at every sacred word the clergyman spoke. The
ceremony

ceremony over, Love re-assumed his power,
 and silenced Reason in the thought of pleasure.
 A woman desirous of pleasing is always sure of
 success—Lady Mary made me forget I was a
 husband—I have been supremely happy, Ned—
 But she is young, I am old—Too soon, I am
 afraid, Nature will tell her the fatal truth,
Adieu.

L E T.

LETTER LI.

Lady MARY Sc— to Miss B——.

“THE half of my fortune I would readily
“ give to be twenty years younger, said
“ to me the General, after the priest had made
“ me his for better and worse.

I feigned a blush, and begged he would no more whisper such wishes in my ear. Was not the General mad to enliven my dislike of him, and wet my appetite for a banquet more luxurious than that he could compliment me with? His preposterous wish, dear Amelia, made me behold Captain Suth—— as the man Nature had created for me: and I said in my heart, “ the half of my fortune would I readily give
“ to be the Captain’s wife.”

What

What a loathsome animal an old man is !—
 The General would love me—how weak in his
 expressions ! Not the least fire in his eloquence
 —he spoke only to make me wish he could speak
 better——O Nature, Nature ! What sacrifices
 must I not make to Virtue, if I take her part
 against thee !

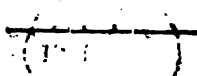
L E T.

L E T T E R LII.

Miss S——, to Miss A——.

HOW can I write I am happy, when my Charlotte is miserable? Upon thy good nature, and knowledge of my heart, I rely for forgiveness. Charlotte, I am happy—Lord C—— loves me—a false delicacy bids me to spare thee the language he spoke—I fear to add insult to thy distress by describing the satisfaction I enjoy—In three days thy Jenny will be Lady C—— Mayest thou be as fortunate as thou art amiable and virtuous

END of the SECOND VOLUME.


The THIRD VOLUME will be published some time next month. It will contain the whole Love-Intrigue between Captain SURH—— and Lady Mary Sc——, from the day of her Marriage to the scene at Barnet.

